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## **Kids online - safety and risks: full findings from children survey of 9- to 16-year-olds in Latvia**

### **Report**

**Original citation:**

Brikse, Inta and Spurava, Guna (2014) *Kids online - safety and risks: full findings from children survey of 9- to 16-year-olds in Latvia*. Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia.

Originally available from the [EU Kids Online, LSE](#)

Funded by the EC's Better Internet for Kids programme

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/60574/>

Available in LSE Research Online: December 2014

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# KIDS ONLINE – SAFETY AND RISKS

FULL FINDINGS FROM CHILDREN SURVEY  
OF 9- to 16-YEAR-OLDS IN LATVIA

INTA BRIKŠE and GUNA SPURAVA

RIGA 2014

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Context

In 2013, 78% of the population in the 16–74 age group used the internet in Latvia. Internet use among students and pupils reached 99%.<sup>1</sup>

Internet development in Latvia began at the start of the 1990s, and progress in this area has been rapid – internet users have subsequently been provided with a well-developed internet infrastructure. There has been intensive development of internet technologies in particular during the past 10 years. Compared to 2004, when broadband internet connectivity was available for only 5% of households in Latvia, its coverage has increased 14 times – in 2013 broadband internet was available for 70% of households. Significant changes have also taken place in the development of wireless and mobile technology – there are more than 3,000 Wi-Fi access points throughout Latvia, with internet use via mobile devices growing rapidly. In 2013, 32% of the Latvian population used the internet via mobile devices.

The situation in Latvia is unique because of two characteristic features – first, due to wide internet access in its public libraries – as a result of private and public initiatives, significant investments have been made since 2006 in developing information and communication technologies (ICTs) in public libraries in Latvia – and second, broadband connectivity and connection speed, in which Latvia ranks among the top 10 countries in the world.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the development of the internet infrastructure in Latvia is creating not only new opportunities, but also risks. The aim of this present study is to help in understanding the actual situation in Latvia concerning internet use by children and teenagers, and thus to create an informative basis that is needed in order to develop a digital and media literacy policy as well as guidelines for use in Latvia.

This report reflects the results from the first part of the study, from the survey of children and teenagers (aged 9–16) carried out in Latvia in the autumn of 2013. The research was conducted using the survey design methodological guidelines from the EU Kids Online II project that took place during 2009–10 in 25 European countries and Australia. This project was carried out by the EU Kids Online Network,

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<sup>1</sup> See

[www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publikacijas/nr\\_36\\_informacijas\\_un\\_komunikacijas\\_tehnologiju\\_lieto\\_sana\\_majsaimniecibas\\_2013\\_13\\_00\\_lv.pdf](http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publikacijas/nr_36_informacijas_un_komunikacijas_tehnologiju_lieto_sana_majsaimniecibas_2013_13_00_lv.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.akamai.com/dl/akamai/akamai-soti-a4-q413.pdf?WT.mc\\_id=soti\\_a4\\_Q413](http://www.akamai.com/dl/akamai/akamai-soti-a4-q413.pdf?WT.mc_id=soti_a4_Q413)

coordinated by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Ipsos MORI conducted fieldwork in Europe.

The research project in Latvia was carried out by the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Latvia, financed by the national research programme, “National identity (language, Latvian history, culture and human security)”, Project 9, “National identity and communication”.

## **1.2. Project framing, design and methodology**

Quantitative studies of the views of children and teenagers have always been a challenge for researchers. In view of the experience gained within the framework of the EU Kids Online II project, a previously validated methodology was used, adapted to the situation in Latvia. The research carried out in Latvia was based on the EU Kids Online approach: child-centred, contextualised and comparative. The theoretical framework in Latvia, as in the EU Kids Online research, includes a critical analysis of the relation between internet use, activities, risk factors and potential harm associated with the internet.

The aim of the study was to provide data in order to analyse where, on what devices, and how much children use the internet, what children do online, risky opportunities, what upsets children online, sexual content, online bullying, communication with other people online, risks and harm online, how children cope with harm, children’s digital skills for safe use of the internet, and support from parents, teachers and peers.

The research analysed the following risk groups associated with internet use: seeing sexual images, being bullied, “sexting” (seeing and receiving sexual messages), meeting new people (strangers) online, negative user-generated content, and the misuse of personal data. The research results were compared in three social demographic groups: age, gender and type of place of residence (e.g. city or rural location).

In analysing the results, a considerable number of factors were compared with common European Union (EU) indicators, taken from the pan-European report: Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A. and Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full findings*. London: EU Kids Online, LSE. Some of the results have been compared with data acquired in Australia and Russia. These have been taken from individual country reports, available at [www.eukidsonline.net](http://www.eukidsonline.net)

### **1.3. The sample**

The research fieldwork – a quantitative survey of children and teenagers – was carried out in the autumn of 2013, from 4 October until 10 November. The target group for the survey was children aged 9–16 who use internet. A total of 1,001 respondents were surveyed. The survey was carried out in all regions of Latvia, ensuring a total of 133 survey sample points. In every household no more than one child was surveyed; if the family had more than one child in the 9–16 age group who use the internet, the choice of child was carried out according to *date of birth*. The sample method used was stratified random sampling, with stratification according to administrative territories; respondents were selected according to the random route method, starting from a random starting address.

Children were surveyed by combining face-to-face interviews with a questionnaire (children themselves ticked off the answers to sensitive questions). The average length of surveys (interview + questionnaire) was 55 minutes. The survey was carried out by using questionnaires in a paper format. See Annex 1: Technical information, at the end of this report.

### **1.4. Research agency**

The Department of Communication Studies of the University of Latvia provided a translation of the questionnaire into Latvian and Russian, as well as adapting it to the situation in Latvia. Fieldwork in Latvia was conducted by one of the leading and most professional research agencies in Latvia – the research centre SKDS. (Since 2000, SKDS has been represented in the European Society for Opinion and Market Research – ESOMAR.)

### **1.5. Research limitations**

The Latvian research methodology and the questionnaire design corresponds to surveys carried out in other countries within the framework of the EU Kids Online project, but it should be noted that the time of the research fieldwork has a difference of three years. The majority of European states' interviews with children were carried out in the spring/summer of 2010, while in Latvia, they were carried out in the autumn of 2013. For this reason, *direct comparison of data is not possible*, and care needs to be taken in interpreting the marked differences, especially given the rapid development of the internet and mobile technologies during these three years. It is therefore not

possible to identify what factors have determined differences in the results – the temporal distance of the research or specific features of the country or state.

At the same time, data collected in Latvia could be a valuable source of information for the EU Kids Online project in general, since they provide topical information about the research questions, and analysis of separate factors could possibly provide an insight into the development of processes linked with children's use of the internet.

Because of limited funding, and unlike other member states from the EU Kids Online Network, no quantitative survey was done of the children's parents. Yet given the fact that parents' role in the use of internet is essential, an opportunity was found to carry out a second stage of the research – a study based on a qualitative methodology about parents' understanding and involvement in children's use of the internet. In the summer of 2014 six focus group discussions with the children's parents were carried out.



## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

### **2.1. Uses and activities online**

- The most popular places to use the internet for Latvian children are: home – a living room or other public room (79%), school (68%), a friend's home (61%), relatives' homes (51%), bedroom or own separate room (49%), library or some other public place (46%), and outside buildings – via a mobile, smartphone or iPad (32%).
- On average, a child uses 2.3 gadgets to access the internet. Equally frequently, the internet is accessed by using a mobile phone or smartphone and personal computer (PC) that is commonly used by all family members (57%) – 32% of the children access the internet via a shared laptop.
- The location and devices used demonstrate that parents, teachers and information professionals have good opportunities to supervise the safe use of the internet by children. Yet it should be considered that internet use is growing fast via mobile phones and smartphones (on average, only 32% used them in the EU in 2010); it is therefore foreseeable that children will use the internet more often and more freely, which may increase risks.
- Children are going online at increasingly younger ages – they used the internet for the first time at the age of eight (the average EU indicator in 2010 was nine).
- The majority of children in Latvia use the internet every day or almost every day (78%), and a majority no less than once a week. The proportion of frequent internet users increases by about 5% from one age group to the next.
- On average, a child on an ordinary day spends at least two hours (107 minutes; in the EU in 2010, 88 minutes) on the internet. Children living in large cities are the most active internet users (110–123 minutes).
- Out of the 17 activities listed in the questionnaire, during the last month, children were engaged on average in 9.1 activities (7.1 in the EU). Children's activities on the internet increase as they become older.
- Internet use for study purposes for children in Latvia is only in third place (83%), after visiting social networking sites (SNSs) (89%) and watching videos (84%). Data collected in Latvia possibly reflect the more extensive focusing of children on entertainment resources, the insufficient provision of resources for

studies, or the faster expansion and use of SNSs among children from the youngest age group.

- Boys are generally more active on the internet than girls. At the same time, there are differences between gender – girls use the internet more often for study purposes, for communicating and creating new content, compared with boys
- Eighty-eight per cent of children in Latvia have their own profile on a SNS, which is much higher than the average in the EU in 2010 (at 59%). This large difference shows both a rapid increase in SNS use, as well as the fact that SNSs are used by increasingly younger children.

## **2.2. Digital skills**

- Children are very self-confident about their knowledge and skills. Forty-nine per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds say that the statement, “I know more about the internet than my parents” “is very true”, and 28% consider it “a bit true”. Boys are more convinced about the truthfulness of this statement. But on average, out of eight digital security skills, Latvian children use 4.8 (in the EU in 2010 it was an average of 4.2). Children’s skills are directly influenced by their age – the older the children, the better their digital skills.
- Eighty per cent of children within the 11–16 age group are able to block messages from those with whom they do not want to communicate, and 72% find information on how to use the internet safely. Sixty-six per cent are able to change privacy settings on SNSs and 64% can delete the history of web pages browsed.
- Risk and harm
- Out of the most common activities that could potentially create risk, it is possible to identify two – 53% of the children, at least sometimes a year, seek new friends on the internet, and 38% add someone they have never met face-to-face to their list of friends or contacts.
- Eighteen per cent of the children experienced something on the internet that bothered them in some way. This indicator is higher than the EU average, at 12%. More frequently, such situations have been experienced by 20% of girls, 19–21% of 13- to 16-year-olds, 23% in the capital Riga, and 27% of those living in other cities.

- Sixty-five per cent of the children admit that the internet contains materials that could bother children of their age.
- Sixty-five per cent of children in the 11–16 age group who have been upset by sexual content on the internet admit that they managed to overcome it immediately, but one-fifth admit that they felt upset for a few days.
- One-third of the children who have been upset by sexual images on the internet hoped that this would pass by itself, 16% tried to solve it themselves, and 16% felt slightly guilty that something had gone wrong; 45% of the children said they had not done any of the above.
- Sixty-one per cent of the children, after having seen sexual images on the internet and having been upset by them, had not spoken about it to anyone, 28% had spoken to a friend, and 18% to parents.
- Thirty-five per cent of the children who had seen sexual images on the internet had stopped using it for a time, and 31% blocked the person who had sent the images. The proportion of children who reported the problem to the internet service provider (ISP), 23%, is comparatively large.
- The proportion of upset children is considerably higher among girls (46%), among the 9–10 and 11–12 age groups (65% and 53% respectively), and among those who live in the capital city and in rural areas (39%).

### **2.3. Pornography**

- Twenty-seven per cent of the children during the last year have seen pictures of a sexual nature; 69% have never seen such pictures. They have been seen more often by boys (31%, 26% of girls), and 15- to 16-year-olds (45%).
- Most often children have seen pictures of a sexual nature on the internet (24%) and television and/or films (19%). Comparing the availability of sexual material on the internet for the 9–10 and 15–16 age groups, it is three times more likely in the latter group, while for other sources of pornography it is twice as likely. This leads to the conclusion that the internet is one of the most significant sources of such content for children.
- Most often sexual images are seen by children as pop-ups (16%); 7% have seen such images on SNSs, as well as on video sites.

## **2.4. Bullying**

- Twenty-three per cent of children in Latvia have experienced bullying. The proportion is slightly higher among boys (24%, 22% of girls), and 9- to 10-year-olds (30%). Most frequently children are bullied when they meet with people face-to-face (14%), but for 7% it occurs on the internet.
- Sixteen per cent of the children admitted that they maltreated other children; comparatively more often they are boys and older children.
- The wider the internet opportunities used by children (for example, social networks), the bigger the chance to confront abuse.
- Confronted with abuse, one-third of children are proactive and try to solve the problem themselves.

## **2.5. “Sexting”**

- Nine per cent of the children had received messages with sexual content, more often girls (10%), older children (15% of 15- to 16-year-olds) and those who live in the cities.
- Twenty-seven per cent of the children who have received such messages were upset about it. Girls were more often upset, as well as younger children (45% among 11- to 12-year-olds), as well as those living in small towns (50%).

## **2.6. Meeting new people**

- Thirty-three per cent of the children got in touch on the internet with someone they had never met face-to-face, but only 7% met someone face-to-face whom they had first dated on the internet; this applied more often to boys (35%), 15- to 16-year-olds (58%), and those living in big cities (45%).
- The number of girls who have met with total strangers is high, at 67%, and 24% have met people who are relatives or friends of people who they know. The indicators among boys are the opposite – 38% and 54% respectively.
- Most often the people the children have met face-to-face they have become acquainted with via SNSs (67%) or on chatrooms (32%). One-fifth became acquainted via gaming sites.

## **2.7. Other risks**

- About one-tenth of children in the 11–16 age group have “very” or “fairly often” paid less attention to their family, friends or studies than required, have

caught themselves “surfing” the internet without real interest, have failed to spend less time on the internet, or they have felt upset if there has been no opportunity to use the internet.

- Twenty-five per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds have seen internet sites discussing how to become very thin, ways of self-harming, experience of drug misuse, and ways of committing suicide.
- About one-tenth of the children in the 11–16 age group have had their personal data misused.

## **2.8. Communication with parents**

- Eighty per cent of the children assert that their parents are doing some activities to monitor their internet use; according to the children’s evaluation, 40% of parents control what children do on the internet.
- Most often parents have helped children when they have had difficulties (64%), explained why some internet sites are good or bad (58%), suggested ways of treating others on the internet (57%), and suggested safe use of the internet (50%).
- Parents’ control and restrictions are distinct for the 9–10 age group but considerably weaker for the older age groups, and for the 15–16 age group their control is minimal.
- Fifty-four per cent of the children consider that parents’ monitoring helps them in their internet use. Assessments about such monitoring were more positive from girls as well as from younger children and children residing in rural areas. One in ten children in the survey admits that they do not always obey their parents’ advice, and ignore their restrictions.

## **2.9. Communication with teachers and information professionals**

- In the case of problems on the internet, teachers are more often informers while parents are personal assistance providers: 64% suggested ways to use the internet safely, 61% explained why some websites are good or bad, and 57% suggested ways to behave towards other people online etc.
- Twenty-one per cent of the children use a librarian’s assistance, 17% someone whose job it is to give advice over the internet and 7% their ISP.

### **2.10. Communication with peers**

- Eighty-one per cent of the children have used some peer assistance. But peers have helped considerably more often than parents or teachers when children have had some problems doing or finding something on the internet (74%, 64% and 56% respectively).
- Less than half of the children have recommended safety advice to peers and received advice from friends about ways to use the internet safely.

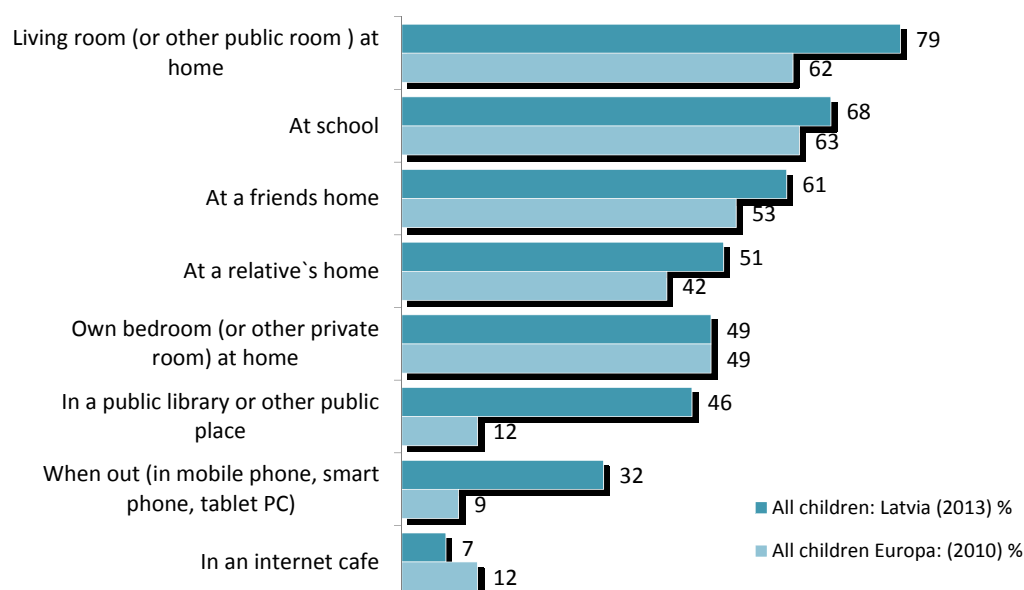
### 3. USAGE

#### 3.1. Where children use the internet

The ways and places children can access the internet have significantly increased and diversified, enabling children to partly or even completely avoid supervision by parents or teachers over their internet use. On average, every child in Latvia uses the internet in four different places: in the living room or another common room (79%), at school (68%), at their friend's home (61%), and at relatives' homes (51%). About half of the children use the internet in their bedroom or in a private room; 46% in a library or some other public place; and 32% when out and about via a mobile, smartphone or iPad.

These indicators are generally similar to other EU countries, and show that home and school is the environment where children use the internet more frequently, and it is in those places respectively where parents and teachers can most efficiently facilitate children's understanding of safe use of the internet and privacy issues.

**Figure 1: Where children use the internet**



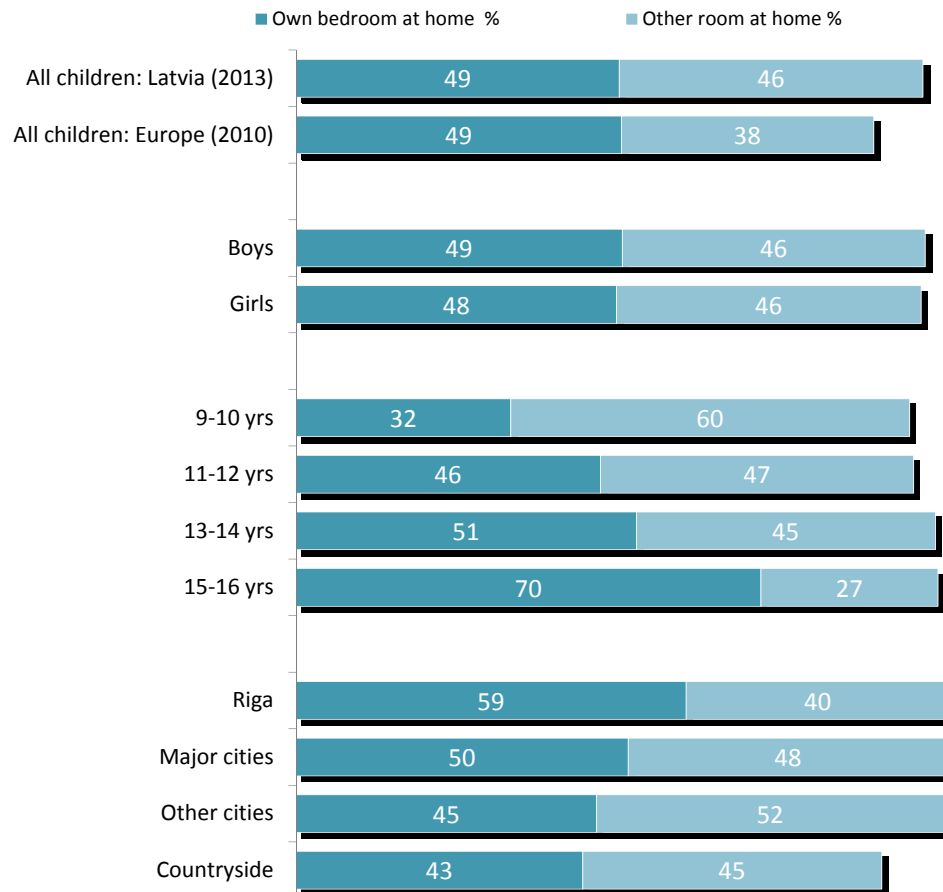
Q: Looking at this card, please tell me where you use the internet these days.

Base: All children who use the internet.

Since home is the most frequent location for internet use, it is necessary to examine the data closely. It is a characteristic feature that children acquire their own space at home when they become older (although the bedroom is often shared with a brother or sister), and it is more typical for city dwellers. This means that supervision of safe

internet requires different approaches depending on the child's age and the actual place of dwelling.

**Figure 2: Children's use of the internet at home**



Q: Looking at this card, please tell me where you use the internet these days.

Base: All children who use the internet.

Latvia has the highest indicators for internet use in a library or other public place (46%), both compared to the average in the EU (12%), as well as to Australia (26%), Russia (9%) and Brazil (4%), which can be explained by the fact that Latvia has implemented programmes ensuring free-of-charge wireless internet access points in public libraries, and there are also public free-of-charge Wi-Fi hotspots.

Attention should be paid to the fact that almost one-third of the children use the internet “outdoors”, which considerably encumbers control and education of safe use of the internet.

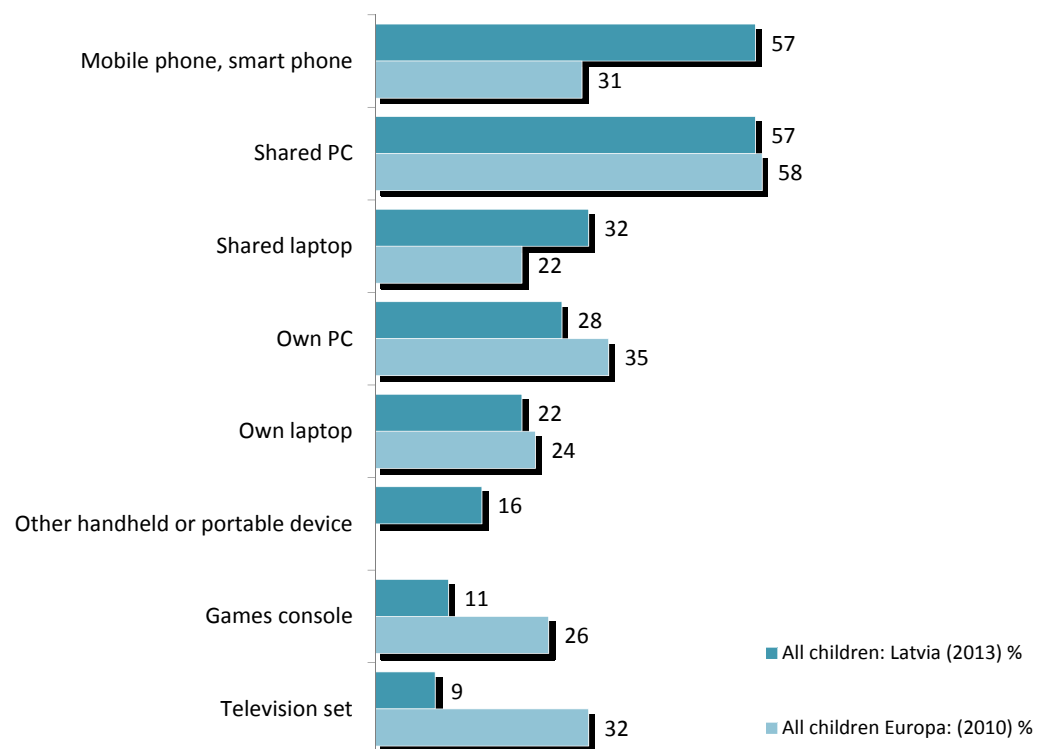


### 3.2. How children access the internet

On average, a child uses 2.3 gadgets to access the internet. Equally frequently, the internet is accessed by using a mobile phone or smartphone and PC that is commonly used by all family members (57%). This indicator has essentially increased compared to the EU average rates, and provides overall implicit evidence about an increase in the use of mobile technologies since 2010, and a decrease in PC use. Devices through which children access the internet are essentially different from data obtained in Russia (in 2012) where the top three devices were one's own PC (57%), a shared PC (48%) and mobile phone (45%).

Fifty-seven per cent of the children access the internet by using a shared PC and 32% by using a shared laptop, which means that parents have quite extensive opportunities to supervise the safe use of the internet by their children, but children are directly dependent on the capacities of their parents and their habits of controlling the patterns of use of mobile phones or smartphones.

**Figure 3: Devices through which children access the internet**



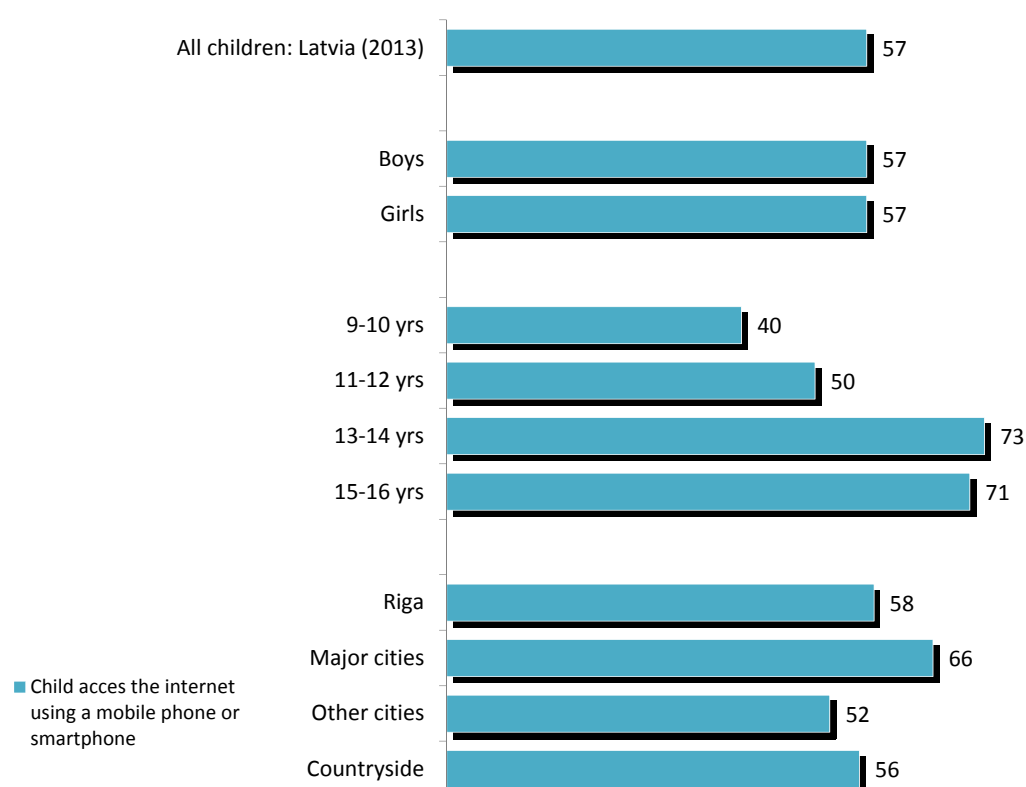
Q: Which of these devices do you use for the internet these days?

Base: All children who use the internet.

The older the children, the more they use the internet via a mobile or smartphone: while among 9- to 10-year-old children 40% use the internet via a mobile phone,

among 13- to 16-year-olds, the proportion is more than 70%. Place of residence also influences the habit of using the internet via a mobile phone or smartphone – it is more typical of children who live in major cities and in the capital.

**Figure 4: Child accesses the internet using a mobile phone or smartphone**



Q: Which of these devices do you use for the internet these days?

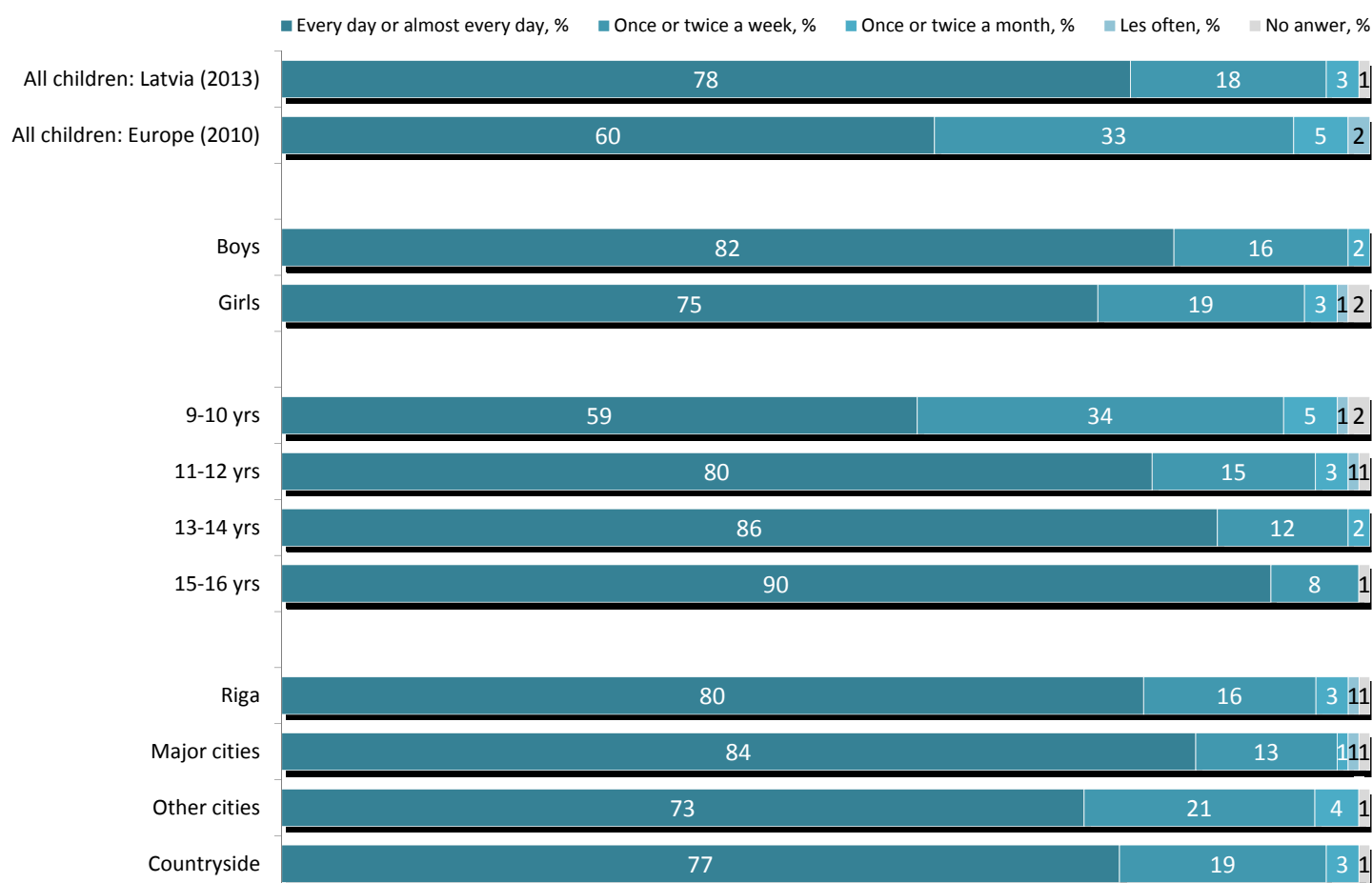
Base: All children who use the internet.

### 3.3. How much children use the internet

The majority of children in Latvia use the internet every day or almost every day (78%), or once or twice a week (18%). Consequently, the majority of children use the internet no less than once a week. There are big differences by age group. While in the 9–10 age group 59% use the internet every day, the proportion of frequent internet users in every subsequent internet users' age group increases by about 5%, and among 15- to 16-year-olds, the internet is used by 90%.

There are also differences by gender: boys are more active internet users (82% use it every day) than girls (75%). There are no essential differences in internet use depending on place of residence.

**Figure 5: How often children use the internet**

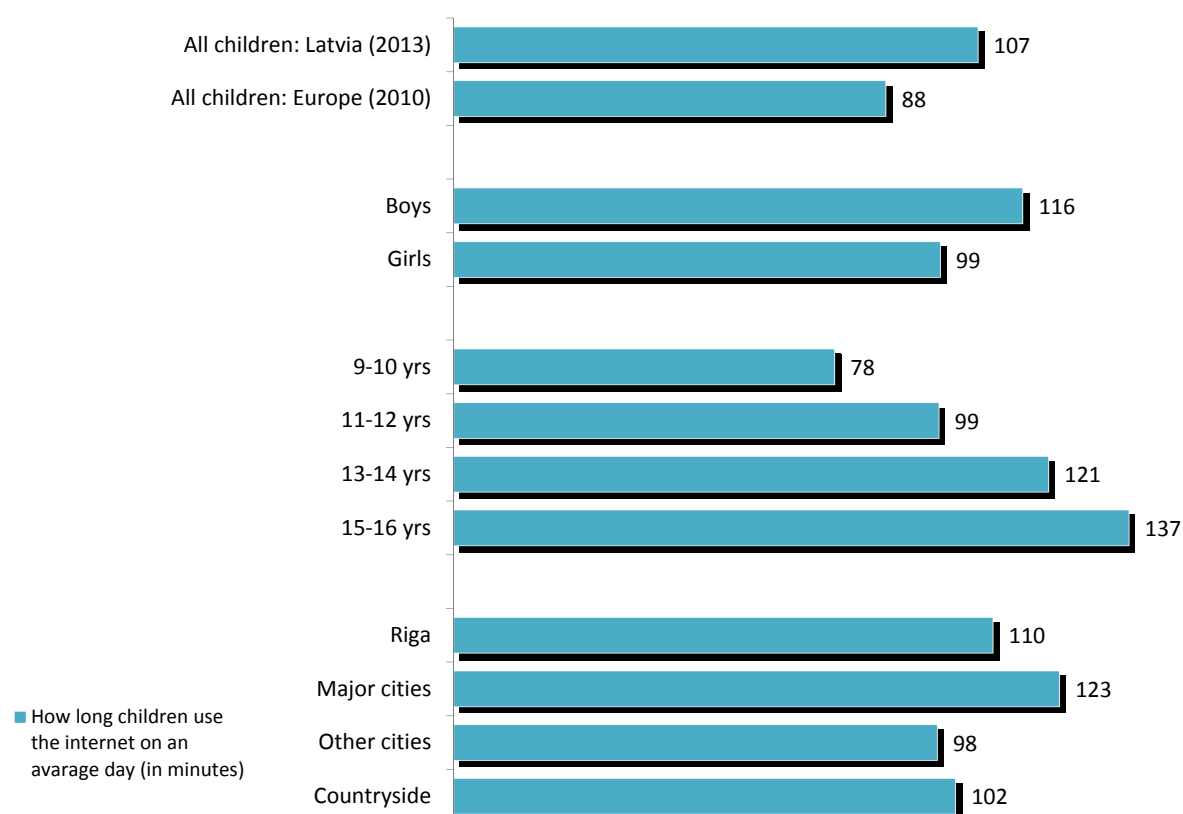


Q: How often do you use the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

On average, a child on an ordinary day spends at least two hours (107 minutes) on the internet. Data show considerable differences among different social demographic groups. Boys spend significantly longer periods of time on the internet than girls – 116 and 99 minutes respectively. The older the children are, the more time they spend on the internet (9- to 10-year-old children spend 78 minutes per day, 13- to 14-year-olds 121, but 15- to 16-year-olds, 137 minutes). The average indicator in the EU in 2010 was 88 minutes. This indirectly shows that internet use among children has increased considerably from year to year, and during the last few years, the internet has become an essential component of children's daily life. Children living in large cities are the most active internet users (110–123 minutes), but less active are those who live in small towns (98 minutes) and rural areas (102 minutes).

**Figure 6: How long children spend on the internet on an average day (minutes)**



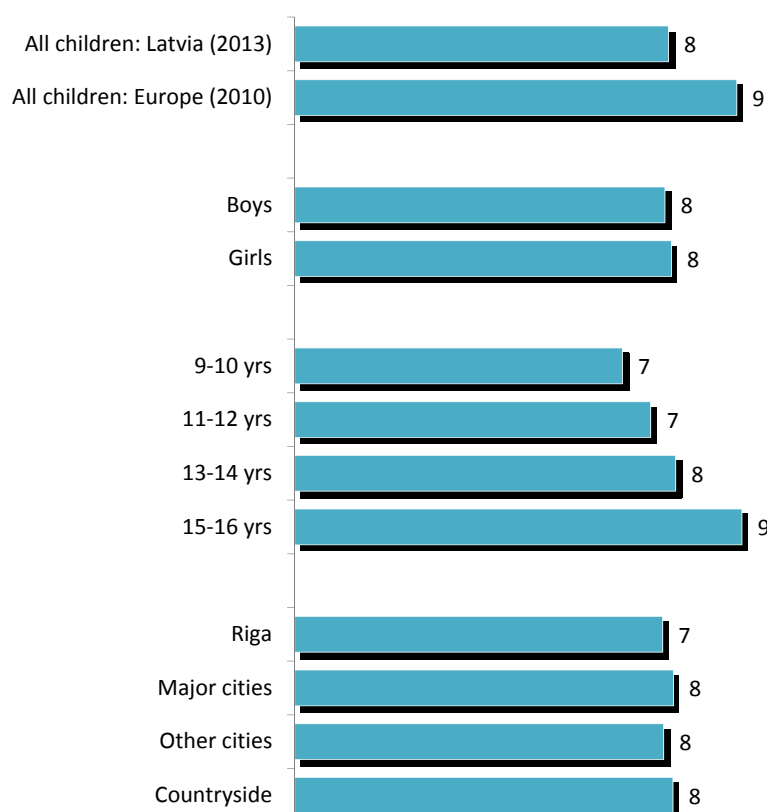
Q: About how long do you spend using the internet on a normal school day/normal non-school day?

Base: All children who use the internet.

### 3.4. When children start to use the internet

At present, children from the 9–16 age group used the internet for the first time at the age of eight (the average EU indicator in 2010 was nine; in Russia in 2012 it was 10). The younger the children, the earlier on average they first use the internet. Children aged 9–12 started using the internet on average at the age of seven.

**Figure 7: Average age (years) when child first used the internet**



Q: How old were you when you first used the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

This indirectly confirms that the internet has started to be used at an increasingly earlier age, as well as highlighting the need to target education activities and initiatives for safe use of the internet at increasingly younger children, their parents and teachers.

### **3.5. Digital literacy and safety skills**

On average, out of eight digital security skills mentioned in the study, the children use 4.8 (in the EU in 2010 on average it was 4.2). This indicator is close to the results obtained in Russia in 2012, at 4.7. Eighty per cent of children within the 11–16 age group are able to block messages from those with whom they do not want to communicate, and 72% are able to find information on how to use the internet safely. Sixty-six per cent of the children are able to change privacy settings on SNSs, and 64% can delete the history of web pages browsed. Fifty-nine per cent of the children can bookmark internet site addresses, 57% can block unwanted advertisements and spams, and 52% can compare different internet sites' home pages to be able to understand if information placed on them is true, but only one-third are able to change filter

preferences. It must be emphasised that these data demonstrate what children believe they can do, and not what they really are capable of doing; they can therefore be used as indicative of certain skills.

Children's skills are explicitly influenced by their age – the older the children, the better their digital skills (11- to 12-year-olds are able to perform on average 3–4 activities, but 15- to 16-year-olds, 6 on average). In all the age groups, boys assess their skills higher than girls of the same age.

**Table 1: Children's digital literacy and safety skills (age: 11+)**

% who say they can...	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Block messages from someone they don't want to hear from	80	64	68	64	84	84	95	91
Find information on how to use the internet safely	72	63	70	57	77	74	83	79
Change privacy settings on a social networking profile	66	56	57	45	70	71	81	84
Delete the record of sites visited	64	52	53	42	75	68	83	79
Bookmark a website	59	64	46	38	66	59	81	78
Block unwanted adverts or junk mail/spam	57	51	43	41	62	60	77	67
Compare different websites to decide if information is true	52	56	41	33	56	54	73	69
Change filter preferences	32	28	20	10	46	33	54	43
<b>Average number of skills</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>5.9</b>

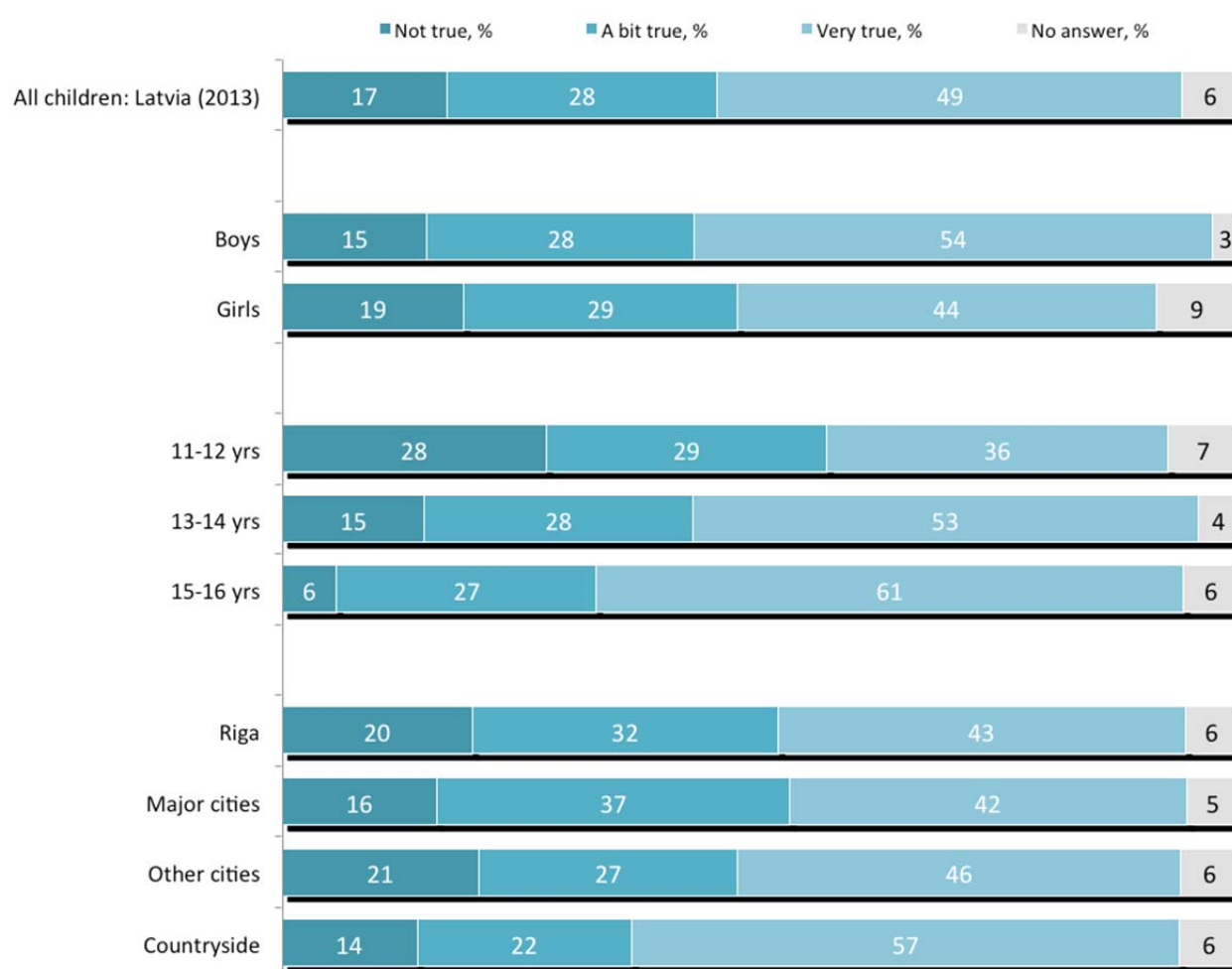
Q: Which of these things do you know how to do on the internet? Please say yes or no to each of the following...

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

As a general measurement of children's opinion about their skills in using the internet, the questionnaire included a request to assess to what extent they agree with the statement that they know more about the internet than their parents. Forty-nine per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds assess it as completely true, and 28% consider it to be partly true; only 17% consider that the statement is not true. Boys are expressly more convinced about the truthfulness of this statement (in total, 82% assess that it corresponds to the actual situation, while the percentage of girls is 73%). A characteristic feature is that younger children have more often assessed that the statement is not true (28% among 11- to 12-year-olds, 15% among 13- to 14-year-olds,

but only 6% among 15- to 16-year-olds). Children living in rural areas are manifestly convinced that their knowledge is more compared to their parents – only 14% do not agree with the statement. More girls gave no answer to this question (9%) and younger children (11–12) (7%). It can be assumed that in many cases, parents’ knowledge or interest about internet use, SNSs and so on is less than among their children, but it is also probable that parents do not communicate sufficiently with their children about internet use, and therefore the children assume that their parents have less knowledge and fewer skills.

**Figure 8: “I know more about the internet than my parents” (age: 11+)**



Q: How true is this of you? “I know more about the internet than my parents.” Please answer not true, a bit true or very true.

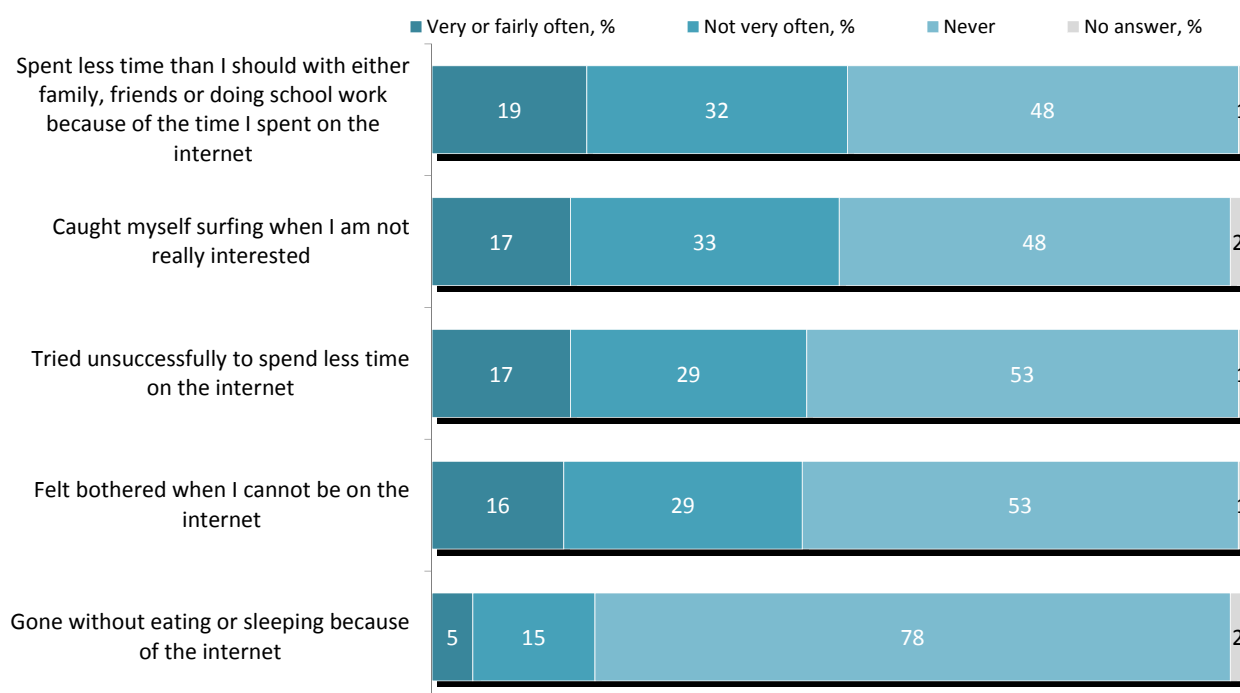
Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

### 3.6. Excessive use of the internet

During the study, 11- to 16-year-old children were asked to assess how often they have experienced different situations that provide or could provide evidence of excessive use of the internet. It is essential that this aspect is not measured on the basis of self-assessment about excessive internet use, but on its possible negative consequences (less time for family and studies, anxiety and stress if there has been no chance to use the internet, and so on).

Approximately one-fifth of the children admit that “very” or “fairly often” they have paid less attention to their family, friends or studies than required, and that they have caught themselves “surfing” the internet without real interest, that they have failed to spend less time on the internet, or that they suffered if there was no chance to use the internet. Another third of the children admit that they have confronted such situations “not too frequently”; consequently, approximately one-half of the children confront such situations at least sometimes.

**Figure 9: Excessive use of the internet (age: 11+)**



Q: How often have these things happened to you?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

All the situations (except “gone without eating and sleeping” that coincide with the average EU data) were felt by children in Latvia more often than can be explained by more frequent internet use than on average in the EU in 2010. Thirty-eight per cent in



the 11–16 age group experienced at least one of the five situations listed in the questionnaire “very frequently” or “quite frequently” during the last year. It is interesting that there is a large difference in this indicator among the Baltic States: in Estonia, 50% of children “fairly” or “very often” experienced one or more form of excessive internet use (the highest indicator in the EU), in Latvia, 38%, but in Lithuania, only 25%.

## **4. ACTIVITIES**

### **4.1. Range of children's online activities**

Out of the 17 activities listed in the questionnaire during the last month, children have been engaged, on average, in 9.1 activities (7.1 in the EU).

Children's activities on the internet increase as they become older – the proportion of children engaged in the activities listed in the questionnaire from the 9–10 age group until the 15–16 age group, with different exceptions (for example, playing games), increases significantly.

The research data indicate that 89% of children in Latvia have visited a profile on a SNS at least once a month, 84% have watched a video, 83% have used the internet for study purposes, and 76% played games on the internet alone or against the computer. Sixty-one per cent have also used email, 61% have posted photos, videos or music for others to be able to see or hear, 57% have played games with other people on the internet, 56% have downloaded music or films, and 55% have used direct messaging.

Internet use for study purposes for children in Latvia is only in third place, and although the frequency of mentioning this activity is similar to the EU (85%), a sequence of priorities must be taken into account. Data collected in Latvia possibly reflect the more extensive focusing of children on entertainment resources, insufficient provision of resources for studies or also a faster expansion and use of SNSs among children from the youngest age group. Comparing data with the results acquired in Russia in 2012, these data strengthen the assumption that there are problems with using the internet for study purposes in Latvia (in Russia, schoolwork is a priority, even if the number of children using the internet for studying is smaller, at 80%). The same is to be said about children in Latvia focusing on entertainment because watching video clips is more frequently mentioned than in other states (76% in the EU and 60% in Russia), but there is a concurrence with children's habits in Australia (85%).

Boys are generally more active on the internet than girls. There are also differences between gender – girls use the internet more often for study purposes, for communicating and creating new content – sending/receiving emails, posting photos, videos or music, as well as for writing diaries or blogs – while boys use the internet more actively than girls to watch videos, play games, download music or films, for instant messaging, to visit a forum/chat and to create an avatar.

**Table 2: Children's activities online in the past month (%)**

	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Visited a social networking profile	89	62	78	80	88	89	94	96	100	94
Watched video clips	84	76	76	69	88	80	89	90	98	93
Used the internet for schoolwork	83	85	63	63	87	87	89	97	89	91
Played internet games on own or against the computer	76	83	81	74	86	73	83	70	84	58
Sent/received email	61	61	29	35	60	49	76	81	88	85
Put (or posted) photos, videos or music to share with others	61	39	33	40	56	68	64	75	73	80
Played games with other people on the internet	57	44	58	44	72	48	76	46	84	37
Downloaded music or films	56	44	34	15	61	49	75	67	89	78
Used instant messaging	55	62	34	29	54	40	67	66	88	77
Put (or posted) a message on a website	53	31	27	28	52	51	65	66	74	72
Read/watched the news on the internet	46	48	23	24	38	41	52	57	77	66
Spent time in a virtual world	40	16	39	22	42	29	56	42	57	41
Used a webcam	37	31	24	24	34	35	40	42	55	51
Visited a chatroom	34	23	16	18	37	26	43	36	57	51
Wrote a blog or online diary	29	11	14	16	19	28	33	41	37	47
Created a character, pet or avatar	20	18	18	12	25	25	20	20	29	16
Used file-sharing sites	11	18	4	0	7	5	14	13	30	24
<b>Average number of activities</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>10.9</b>

Q: How often have you played internet games in the past 12 months?

Q: Which of the following things have you done in the past month on the internet?

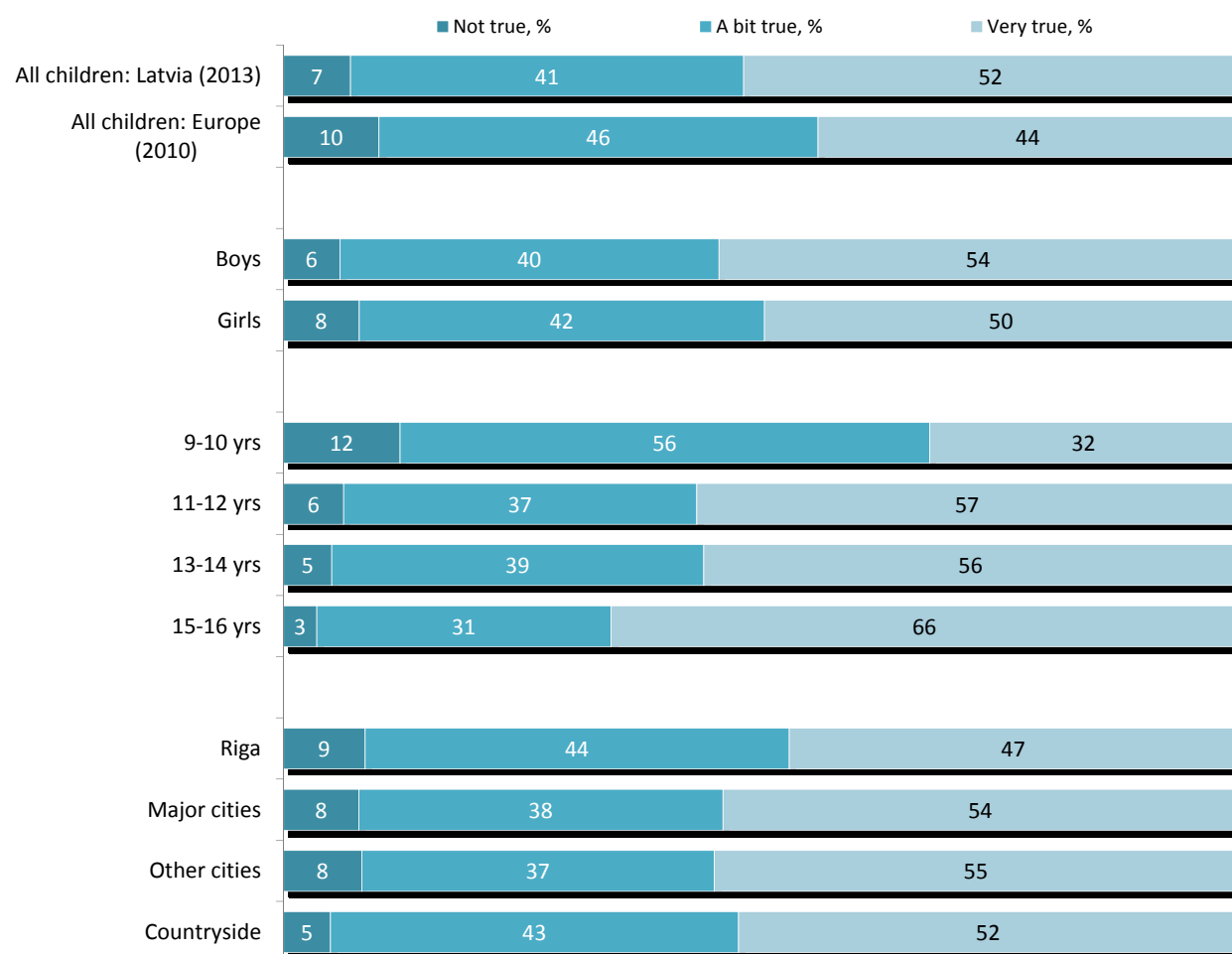
*Base:* All children who use the internet.

## **4.2. Perceived quality of online content**

Fifty-two per cent of the children consider that there are many things on the internet that are valuable for children of their age, but about a tenth consider that there are no useful things on the internet for their age. These indicators differ from the average data in the EU (2010) and Russia (2012), where fewer children agree that there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of their age (44% and 45% respectively).

The survey shows a certain correlation – the older the children are, the more they consider that the internet contains valuable things for their age (32% of 9- to 10-year-olds agree, but 66% of 15- to 16-year-olds). Opinions from the younger children in Latvia coincide with average indicators in EU states (34% “very true”). It must be emphasised that this is essentially different from other age groups, among which there are considerably more supporters to the statement than on average in the EU states in 2010. This implies that internet content for older children has become more extensive during the last few years, and has also become more available, complying with their interests and needs, and increasing their gratification. It can be assumed for the younger children that their internet use is much more controlled, and when adults make choices about what the children will use, perhaps they are not always aware of the resources offered by the internet. Diversity and availability of resources in Latvia could also be influenced by the small size of market for which it is not possible to develop many new products, as well as the still insufficient knowledge of foreign languages at this age to use resources in foreign languages.

**Figure 10: “There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age”**



*Q:* “There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age.” Response options: not true, a bit true, very true.

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

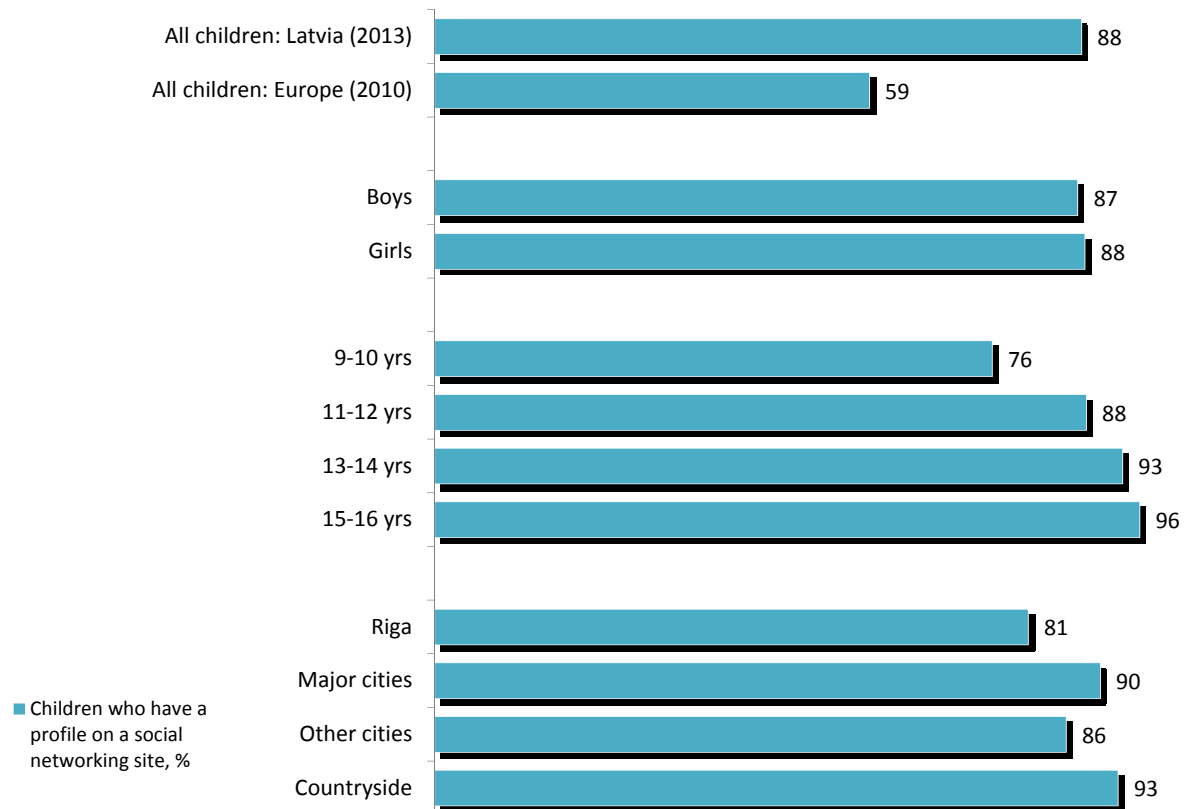
### 4.3. Children’s use of social networking sites

Eighty-eight per cent of children in Latvia have their own profile on SNSs, which is a much higher indicator than on average in the EU in 2010 (59%) and Russia in 2012 (79%). Compared to EU data, it can be assumed that this large difference shows both a rapid rise in SNS use, as well as the fact that increasingly younger children are using SNSs.

Visiting SNSs is also the most frequent activity of children on the internet. It is possible that the active use of SNSs is associated with the fact that the national SNS, draugiem.lv, is the most popular social network in Latvia – 67% of children in the 9–16 age group have indicated that it is their most frequently used SNS. It is distinctly more popular among the younger children (9–10), where it has been mentioned as the

most frequently used one by 77% of the entire target group. In April 2014 the site had 744,232 active users (69,862 in the 7–12 age group, 67,750 in the 13–17 age group).

**Figure 11: Children who have a profile on a social networking site**



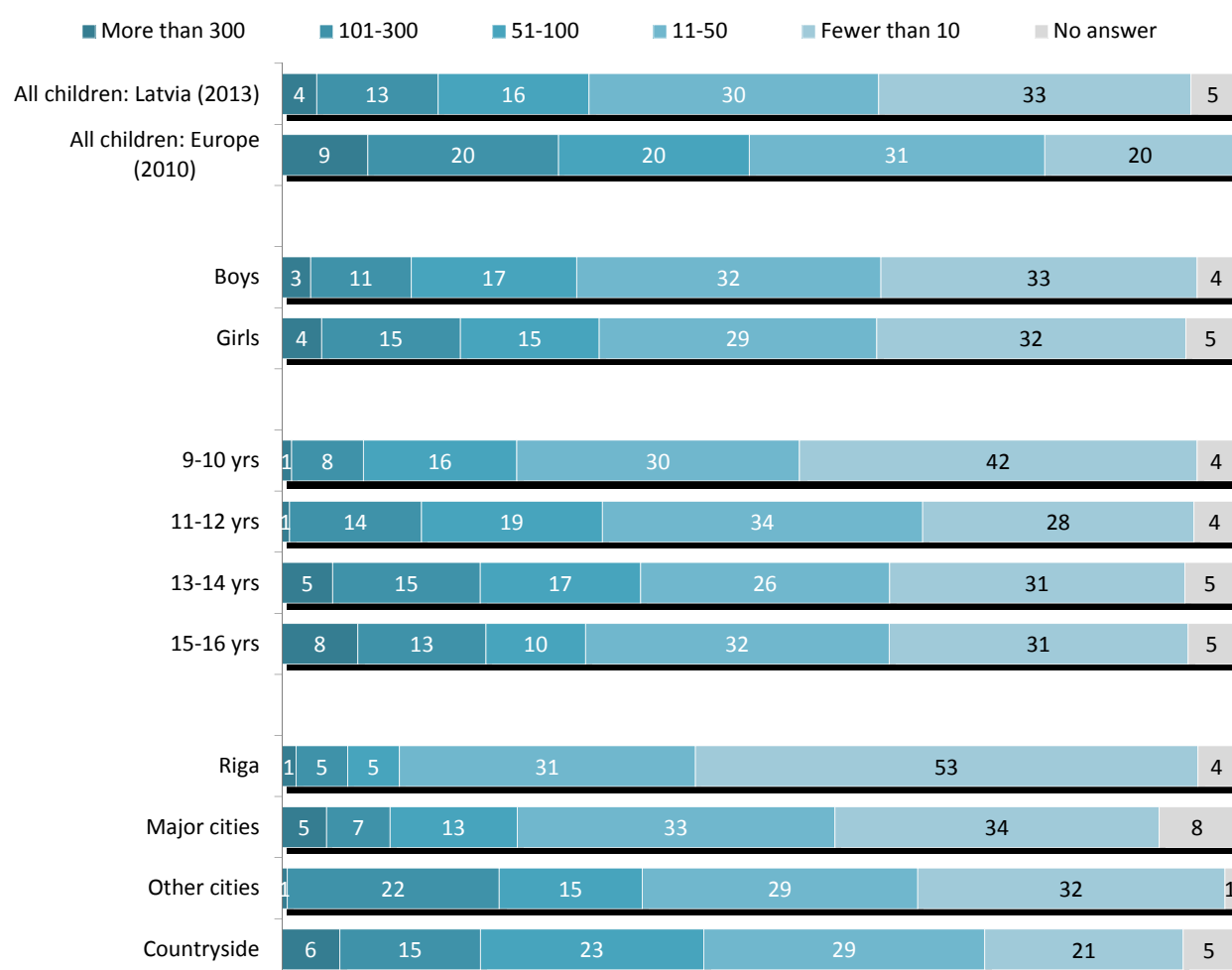
Q: Do you have your OWN profile on a social networking site that you currently use, or not?

Base: All children who use the internet.

#### **4.4. Characteristics of children's contacts on social networking sites**

Although it has often been claimed that children have many contacts on SNSs (and this is frequently testified by the number of formal friendships/contacts), the answers from the children show that the number of contacts on SNSs for the majority of children does not exceed 50 (63%), and for one-third of the children, the number does not exceed 10. It must be emphasised that the present study identified the number of those with whom the child is communicating on SNSs – the overall number of contacts on SNSs might also be larger, but only some of the children maintain communication on a daily basis.

**Figure 12: Number of contacts on children's social networking profiles**



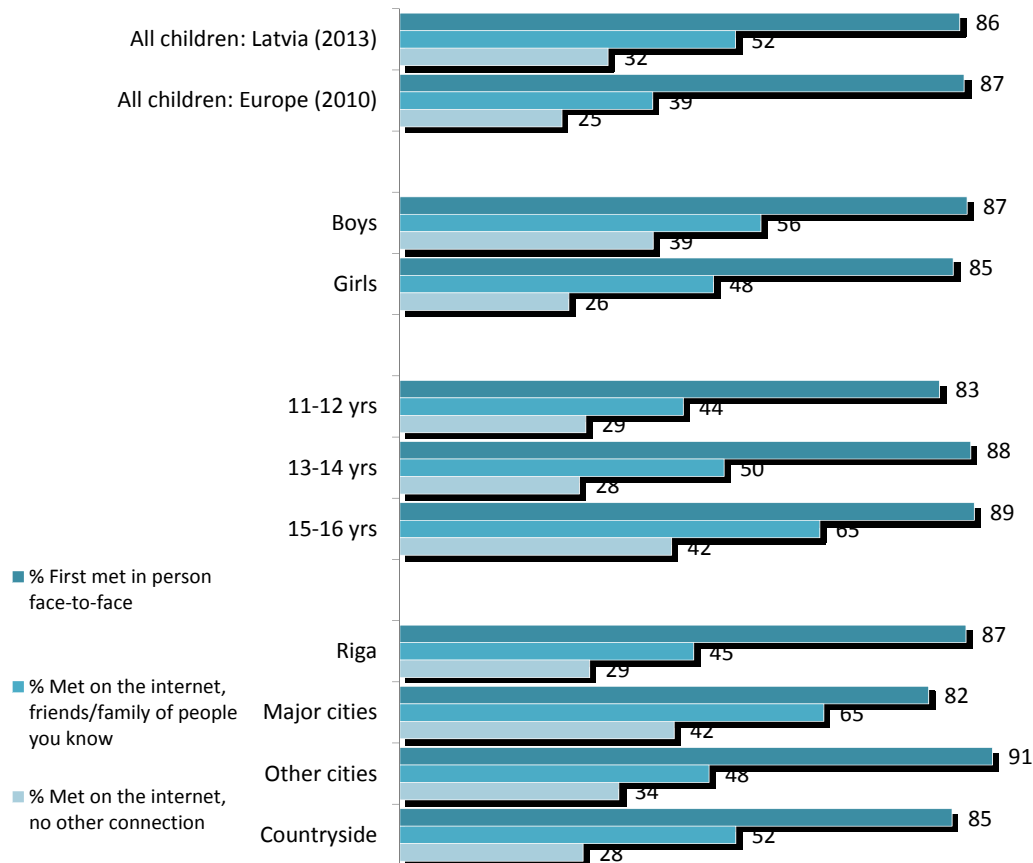
Q: Roughly how many people are you in contact with when using [name of child's (most used) social networking site]?

*Base:* All children who have a profile on a social networking site.

Boys are more actively making acquaintances on the internet. Comparing age groups, it is obvious that the number of social networking contacts is larger within the 11–14 age group, while the number of contacts is approximately identical in the 9–10 and 15–16 age groups. Making acquaintances and communicating with people the child does not know personally and has never met must be viewed as potential risk factors. Looking at it from this perspective, boys are more subject to risk (39% communicate with “friends” they do not know personally), as well as 15- to 16-year-olds and those living in cities. Fifty-three per cent of children look on the internet for friends at least several times a year, and 38% add someone they have never met personally to their friends list. It is characteristic that more relationships with people unknown to them are

maintained by children living in cities, but in general, children communicate mostly with people they have met face-to-face.

**Figure 13: Nature of children's online contacts (age: 11+)**



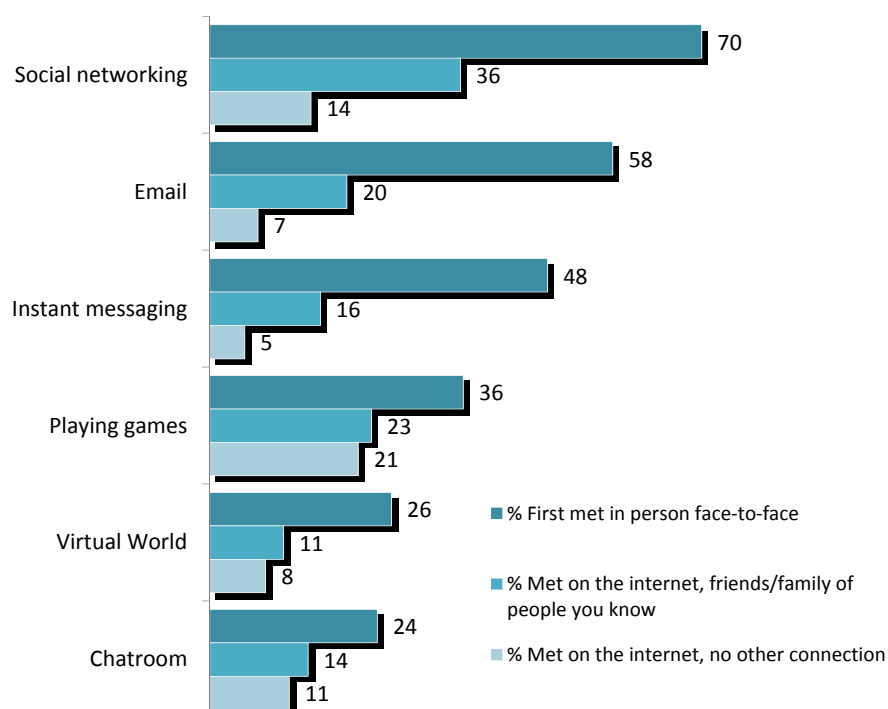
Q: Tell me the types of people you have had contact with when doing each of these things: people you first met in person face-to-face; people who you first met on the internet, but who are friends or family of other people you know; people who you first met on the internet, but who have no other connection to your life outside of the internet.

Base: All children aged 11–16 who communicate on the internet in each of the ways shown.

Internet communication with people with whom acquaintance has been made online and who they have not previously met in person most often takes place when playing games on the internet, on SNSs and chatrooms. Thus it can be assumed that in these online environments, children are the most subject to risks and dangers.



**Figure 14: Nature of children's online contacts, by type of communication (age: 11+)**

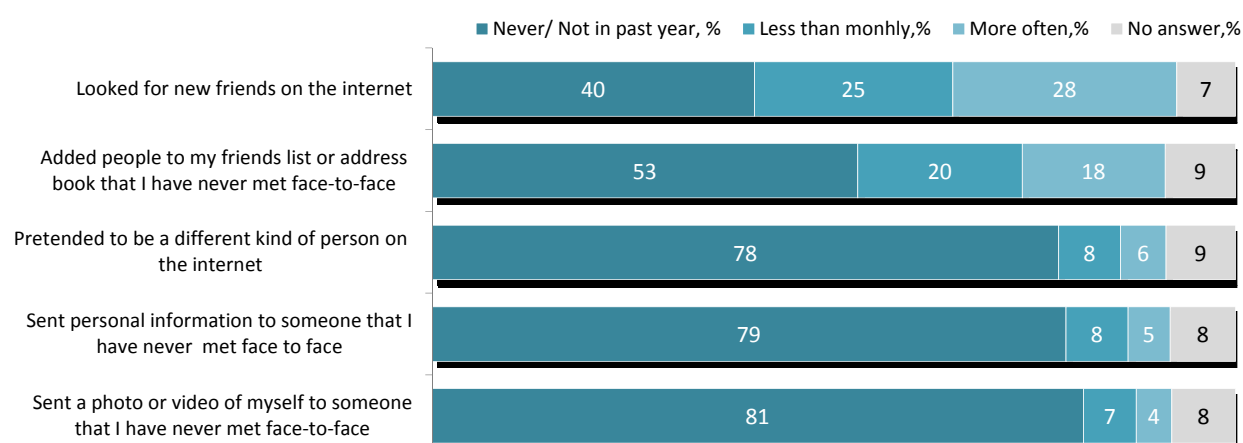


Q: I am going to read out each of the things you have just told me you do (e.g., email or whatever). For each one, I'd like you to tell me the types of people you have had contact with when doing each of these things. Response option as before.

Base: All children aged 11–16 who communicate on the internet in each of the ways shown (email, instant messaging, etc.).

The most frequent activities for establishing relationships performed by children are looking for new friends and inclusion of unknown people on their friends lists.

**Figure 15: Children's actions in relation to online contacts**



Q: Have you done any of the following things in the PAST 12 MONTHS; if yes, how often have you done each of these things?

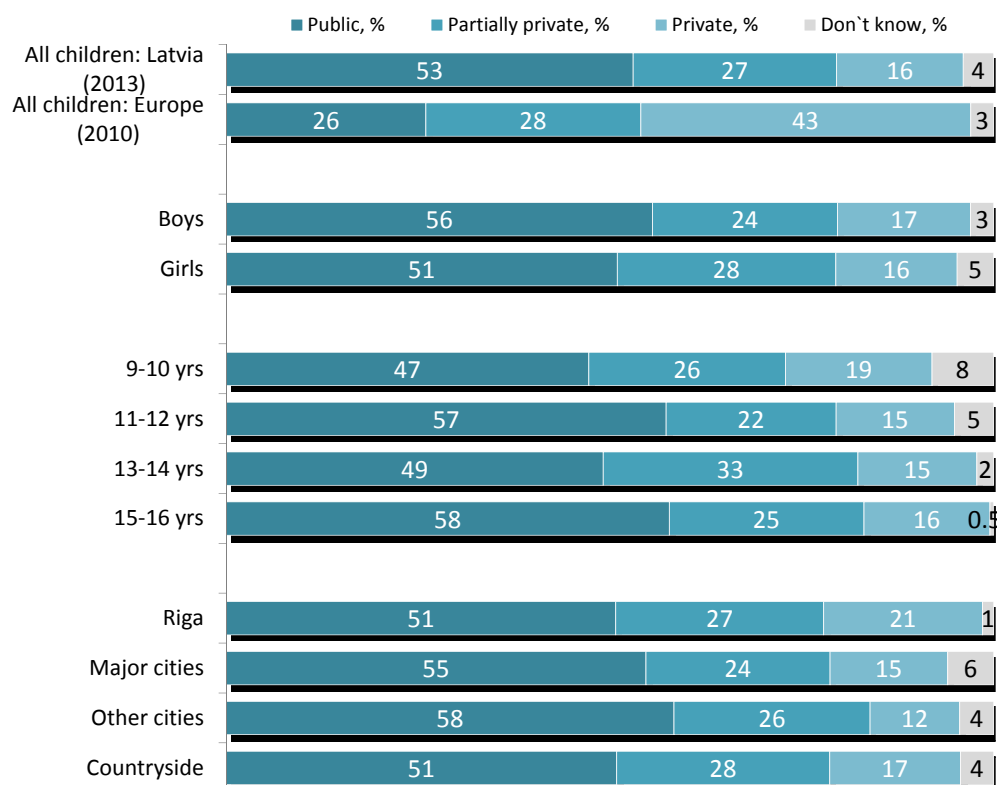
Base: All children who use the internet.

#### **4.5. Use of privacy settings on social networking sites**

Privacy settings on SNSs is one of the essential indicators of internet safety, in particular, within the context of the data examined above on the number of contacts children have on SNSs. Only 16% of the children's social network profile is private and 27% are partly private, while for 53% of children, it is fully public (in 2010 in the EU only 26% of children indicated that their profile was completely public, but 43% that it was fully private). These indicators are also much lower than in Russia, where 40% of children keep their profile private. Explanations could be associated both with the fact that children do not have sufficient knowledge about risks, and that parents pay little attention to protecting their children's privacy, as well as by the fact that many children have small numbers of contacts, and hence their networking is small and less active.

Age groups do not display a specific tendency that by getting older they become more aware of the risks if their personal information is publicly available, because an almost equal number of SNS profiles are public for the 9–10 and 13–14 age groups (47% and 49% respectively), and for the 11–12 and 15–16 age groups (57% and 58% respectively). Place of residence does not demonstrate any tendencies either, because 51% of profiles are public for those children living in the capital or countryside. It should be noted that, depending on the place of residence of children, several other aspects displayed differences.

**Figure 16: Children's use of privacy settings on social networking sites**



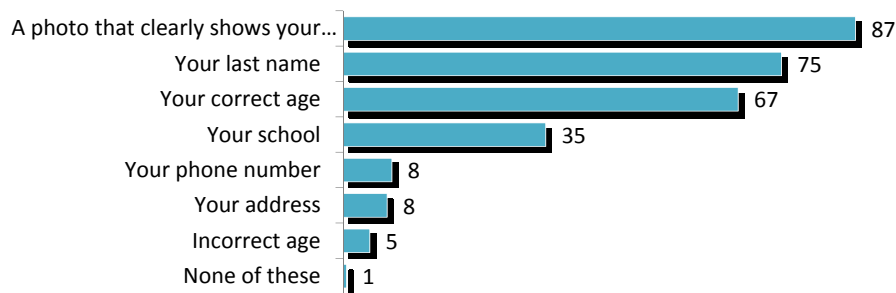
Q: Is your profile set to...? Public, so that everyone can see; partially private, so that friends of friends or your networks can see; private, so that only your friends can see; don't know.

*Base:* All children who have a profile on a social networking site.

Eighty-seven per cent of the children have added a photo in which their face is distinctly seen to their social network profile. Likewise, 75% of the children in their profile have indicated their last name and 67% their age. Only one-third of the children indicated their school or other education establishment, but one in ten children indicate their address and/or phone number. From the seven types of information listed in the questionnaire, children in Latvia, on average, have provided their personal information on SNSs in 2.5 categories.

It is characteristic that children post pictures, indicate their last name and correct age much more frequently than the name of their school. Only 8% indicate their phone number and/or home address. This is a lower indicator than in the EU on average (address or phone number, 14%).

**Figure 17: What information do children show on their social networking profile?**



Q: Which of the bits of information on this card does your profile include about you?

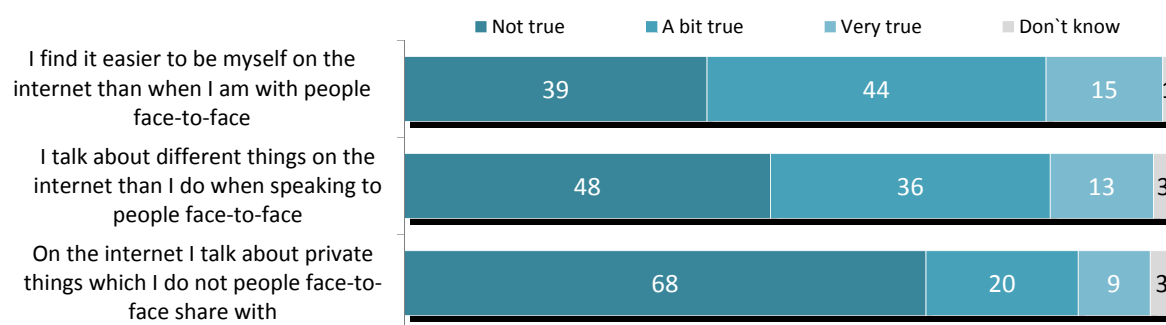
Base: All children who have a profile on a social networking site.

#### **4.6. Children's approach to online communication**

To a large extent it is also possible to identify threat and risk situations on the internet by examining whether and how children's communication differs in face-to-face and online communication situations. Data obtained by this present study show that children's communication on the internet differs from personal, face-to-face communication – about one-half of the children admit that it is easier for them to be their own selves and to discuss different themes on the internet than when meeting people in person. And 29% also admit that they talk about themes on the internet that they would never discuss with people in person.

The study data suggest that children can be divided into two numerically roughly equal target groups – those whose internet communication does not differ from face-to-face communication, and those whose internet communication is different. The difference in this case means freer and more open communication, ability to be more of one's own self than during personal communication face-to-face. This, in turn, indicates the need to diversify awareness-raising activities about safe use of the internet for each of these specific target groups.

**Figure 18: Online and offline communication compared (age: 11+)**

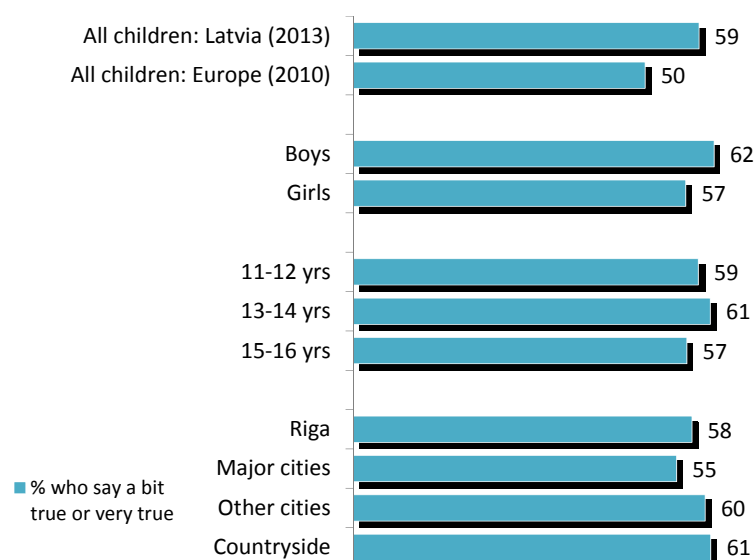


Q: How true are these of you?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

Given the above, that children's communication on the internet is often freer and more unhindered than during meeting a person face-to-face, it is essential to find out with whom children communicate online. For 86% of the children, their contacts are those the child knows personally, and in 52% of cases, they are friends or relatives of people the child knows. At the same time, the proportion of people children have made acquaintance with on the internet without previously knowing them is 32%.

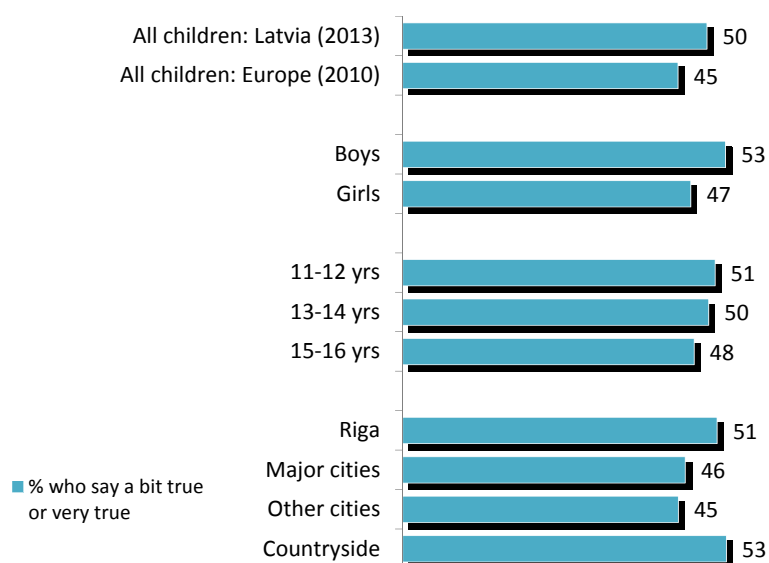
**Figure 19: “I find it easier to be myself on the internet than when I am with people face-to-face” (age: 11+)**



Q: How true are these of you?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

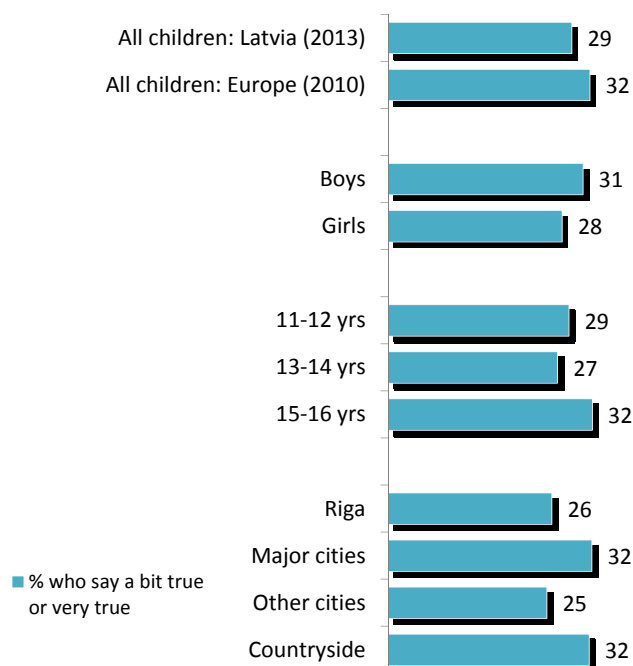
**Figure 20: “I talk about different things on the internet than I do when speaking to people face-to-face” (age: 11+)**



Q: How true are these of you?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

**Figure 21: “On the internet I talk about private things which I do not share with people face-to-face” (age: 11+)**



Q: How true are these of you?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

Making acquaintances on the internet is more active among boys and the older target groups (39% of boys communicate with people with whom they have made

acquaintance only on the internet). Making acquaintance and communication with those the child does not know personally and has never met can be perceived as potential risk factors. On the basis of this evaluation, boys and children from the 15–16 age group, and children dwelling in cities, are more exposed to risks.

## **5. RISK AND HARM**

### **5.1. Overall experiences of harm**

During the survey, the children were also asked to indicate how frequently they have been engaged in different activities that could potentially pose a threat to their safety and privacy. There are two widespread activities that could potentially create risk – 53% of the children seek new friends on the internet at least sometimes a year, and 38% add someone they have never met face-to-face to their list of friends or contacts. Different other activities are done by no more than one-tenth of the children.

When asked to give a general assessment of whether children have seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered them in some way, 18% admitted that there had been such situations during the last year. This indicator is higher than in the EU on average (12%), and lower than in Russia (26%).

More frequently, such situations have been experienced by 20% of girls, 19–21% of 13- to 16-year-olds, 23% by those living in the capital Riga, and 27% living in other cities.

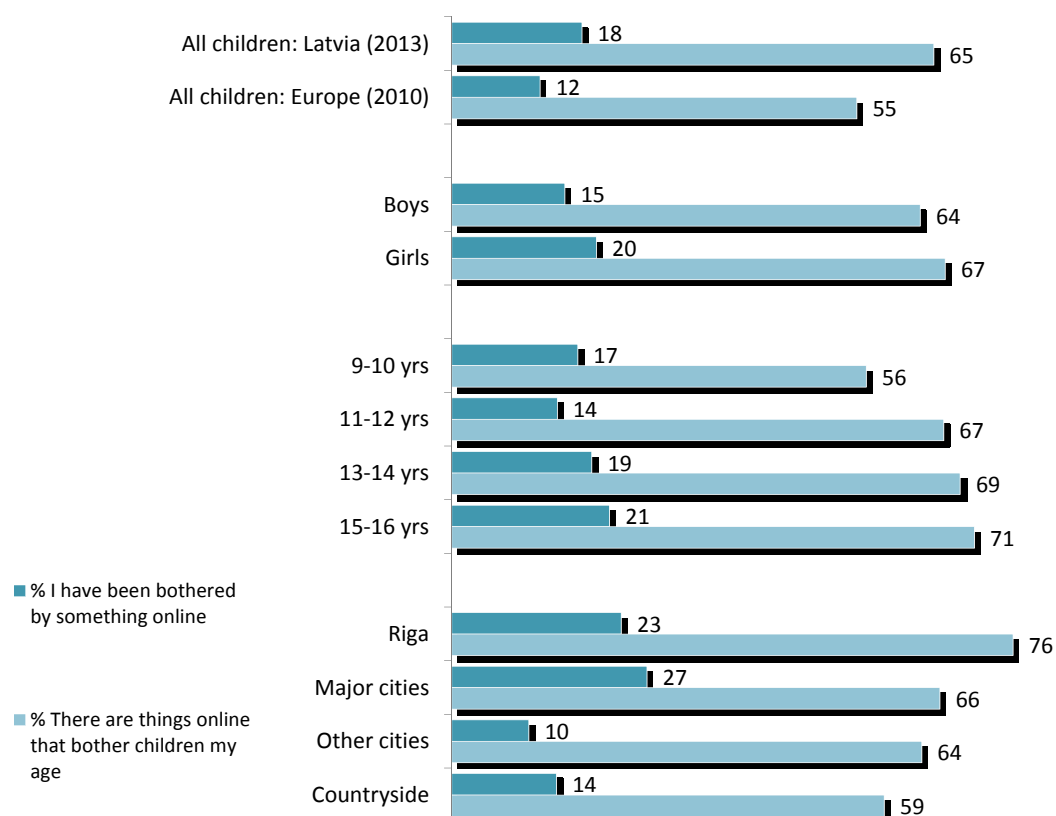
Evaluating the suitability of content available on the internet for children of their age, 65% of the children admit that the internet also contains material that could bother children of their age. Girls, older children and those living in cities are especially convinced about this, which means that these are the groups of children who have had negative experiences on the internet.

In Latvia this indicator is significantly higher than on average in the EU (55%) and Russia (53%). This fact requires more in-depth study – whether children are more cautious and treat internet content with more suspicion, or whether they have indeed more frequently confronted something that could bother them.

Although indicators of personal experience are comparatively low, concerns are still raised by the fact that the majority of children admit there are materials on the internet that are unsuitable.



**Figure 22: Online experiences that have bothered children**



Q: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it.

Q: Do you think there are things on the internet that people about your age will be bothered by in any way?

Base: All children who use the internet.

## **6. Seeing sexual images**

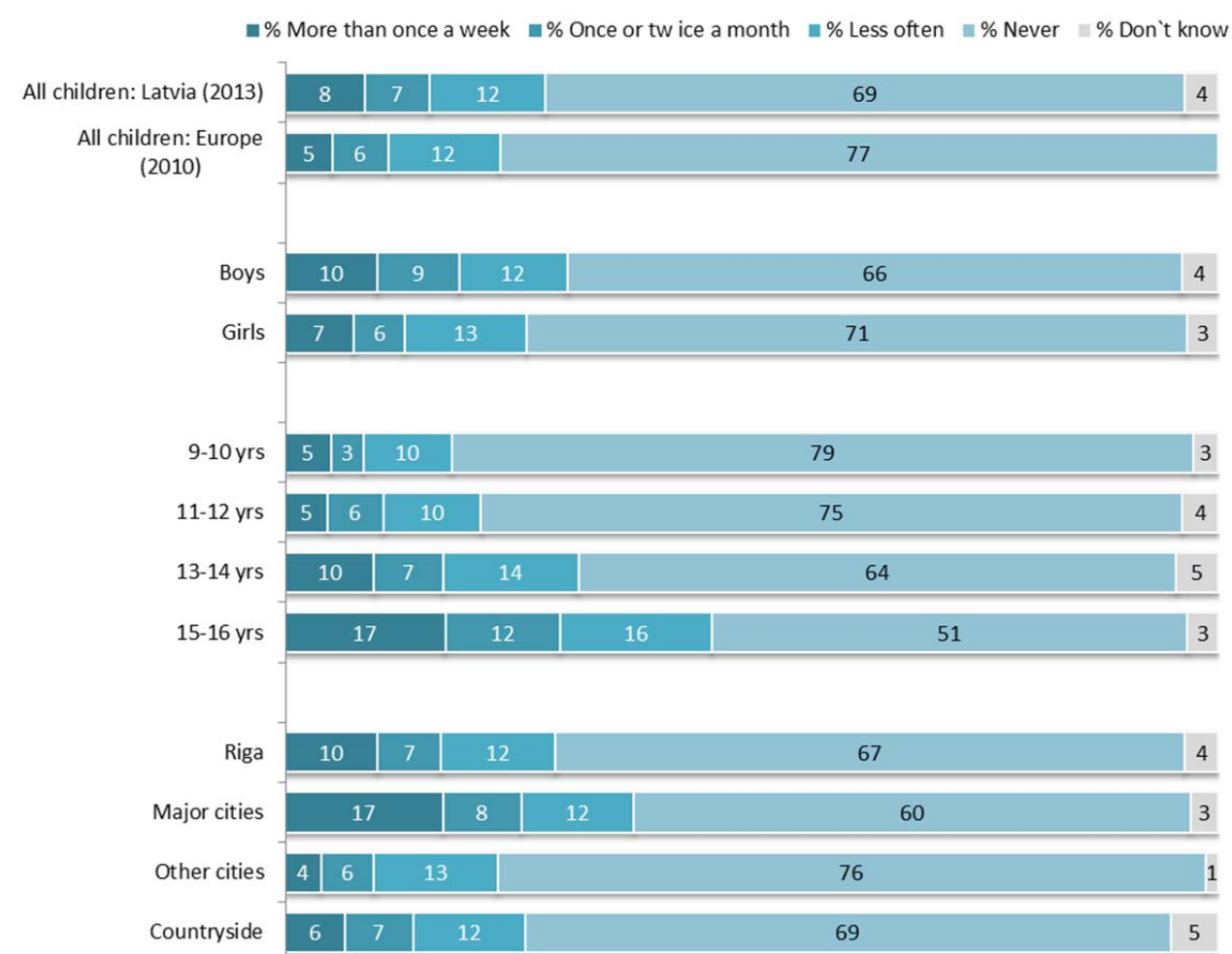
When assessing the availability of materials of pornographic content on the internet, several methodological challenges must be overcome. First, pornography cannot always be precisely and distinctly defined. It includes a wide scope of different materials that can be both legal and illegal. And availability of pornographic content cannot be defined as explicitly harmful – it can be only defined as creating a potential risk. Second, studying the availability of pornographic material in a children's survey is a very complicated task – for ethical reasons it is not possible to describe pornography very precisely and explicitly, because children who have not been confronted with it may develop an interest and wish to find materials of this type. Consequently, although data in this chapter concern the availability of pornography, this term was not used directly, either in the survey questionnaires or in the report. Questions about this topic were formulated for children with the following initial explanatory text: “In the past year, you have seen lots of different images – pictures, photos, videos. Sometimes, these might be obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or people having sex.”

### **6.1. Where children have seen sexual images online**

To gain an insight into the availability of sexual content, children were asked to assess if they had seen such images in general, irrespective of where it had happened. This allows an assessment of the availability of sexual content in general, and its dissemination through the internet as a channel.

A total of 27% of children during the last year have seen pictures of a sexual nature (8% have seen them more often than once a week, 6% several times a month, but 12% more rarely). The proportion of those who have never seen such pictures is 69%. Such pictures have been more often seen by boys (31%, 26% of girls) and 15- to 16-year-olds (45%).

**Figure 23: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in the past 12 months**



Q: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual] in the past 12 months?

Q: How often have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Most often children have seen sexual pictures on the internet (24%) and television and/or films (19%), and for one in ten children, also in a magazine or book. Comparing accessing materials of a sexual content in the 9–10 and 15–16 age groups, it is three times more on the internet in the latter group, while for other sources of pornography it is twofold. This leads to the conclusion that the internet is one of the most significant sources of such content for children. It must be added that the source of materials of sexual content for boys is also television and films.

**Table 3: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in the past 12 months, by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
On any websites	24	14	13	13	17	20	33	27	44	38
On television, film or video	19	12	10	9	15	15	26	20	36	25
In a magazine or book	9	7	7	5	6	7	10	9	15	15
By text (SMS), images (MMS) or otherwise on mobile phone	3	3	0	1	2	2	4	3	7	3
By Bluetooth	2	1	0	1	1	1	3	0	3	3
Other	15		10	7	8	12	17	16	26	28

Q: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual] in the past 12 months?

Q: In which, if any, of these places have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] in the past 12 months?

Q: Have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] on any websites in the past 12 months? (multiple responses allowed)

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 6.2. How children have seen sexual images online

It is complicated to identify if children have seen images or content of a sexual nature by chance or deliberately when using the present survey methodology, but the question, in what way children have seen such content, was used as an indirect indicator in the study. And these data show that most frequently children have seen content of a sexual nature by chance when they have not been looking for it.

In total, 24% of the children have seen images of a sexual nature on the internet and most often they have been seen by pop-ups (16%); 7% have seen such images on SNSs, and many also on video sites. There are distinct differences among the different age groups: in the 9–10 age group, 13% of boys and girls have seen images of a sexual nature on the internet, but in the 15–16 age group, it is 44% and 38% of boys and girls respectively.

**Table 4: Whether the child seen sexual images online in the past 12 months, by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
By images that pop up accidentally	16	7	7	7	11	13	22	18	30	28
On a social networking site	7	3	2	2	3	6	10	10	11	17
On a video-hosting site	7	5	4	3	6	6	11	3	16	12
On a gaming website	6	2	5	3	6	5	10	2	15	6
On an adult/X-rated website	4	4	0	1	3	2	4	5	10	8
On a peer-to-peer file-sharing website	2	2	0	1	2	1	2	3	2	4
Some other type of website	6	3	4	2	2	5	8	8	7	16
<b>Seen sexual images online</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>38</b>

Q: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

Q: Which types of website have you seen [any kind of sexual images] in the last 12 months?

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

Children aged 11–16 were asked to indicate what type of images they had seen. They were most often images or videos of nude people (22%), and images showing intimate parts of the body (17%); 10% saw images or videos depicting individuals engaged in a sexual act.

**Table 5: What kind of sexual images the child has seen online in the past 12 months, by age (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Images or video of someone naked	22	11			12	14	29	17	35	32
Images or video of someone's "private parts"	17	8			8	10	17	14	30	26
Images or video of someone having sex	10	8			7	5	14	8	14	16
Images or video or movies that show sex in a violent way	3	2			3	3	3	3	1	5
Something else	5	2			1	3	4	7	7	8
<b>Seen sexual images online</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>			<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>38</b>

Q: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

Q: Which, if any, of these things have you seen on a website in the last 12 months?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

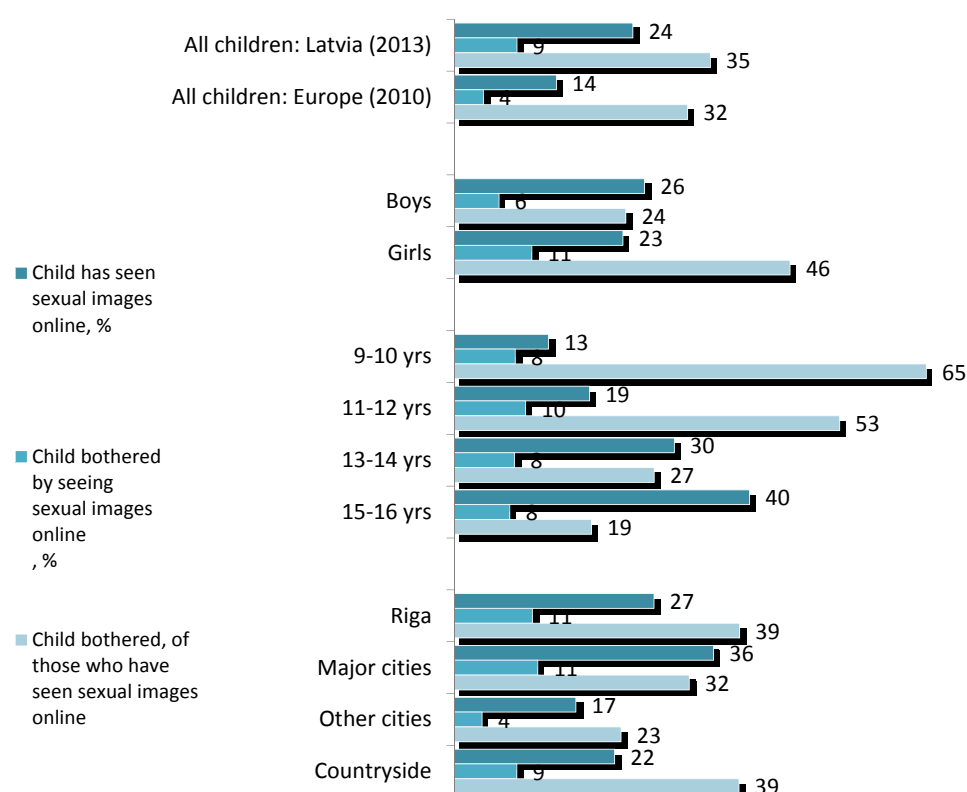
### 6.3. Perceived harm from sexual images online

As mentioned above, availability of content of a sexual nature cannot always be defined as harmful to children. This poses an important methodological question – how to identify if confrontation with this kind of material inflicts harm on children, and what kind of harm. It depends on many considerations, for example, looking from the perspective of whether such content is suitable for children at all, and how its suitability differs for various age groups, as well as the perceptual differences of each individual child, and so on. Within the given study, as an indicator of harm, the question of how children perceived content of a sexual nature and whether it upset them was used. This indirectly provides evidence about the harm inflicted, or at least about the child's negative emotional reaction to the images seen.

In total, 24% of the children have seen images of a sexual nature on the internet during the last 12 months (23% in the EU and 49% in Russia). Among all the children

who have seen such images, 9% have felt upset by them, while among those who have seen such images in general, the proportion of children who have been upset by them was 35%. The proportion of upset children is considerably higher among girls (46%), among the 9–10 age group (65%) and also the 11–12 age group (53%), and among those who live in the capital city and in rural areas (39%). The proportion of children who have seen materials of a sexual nature is lower among girls and younger children, but there is a higher proportion among them who have felt upset about it.

**Figure 24: Child has seen sexual images online and was bothered by this**



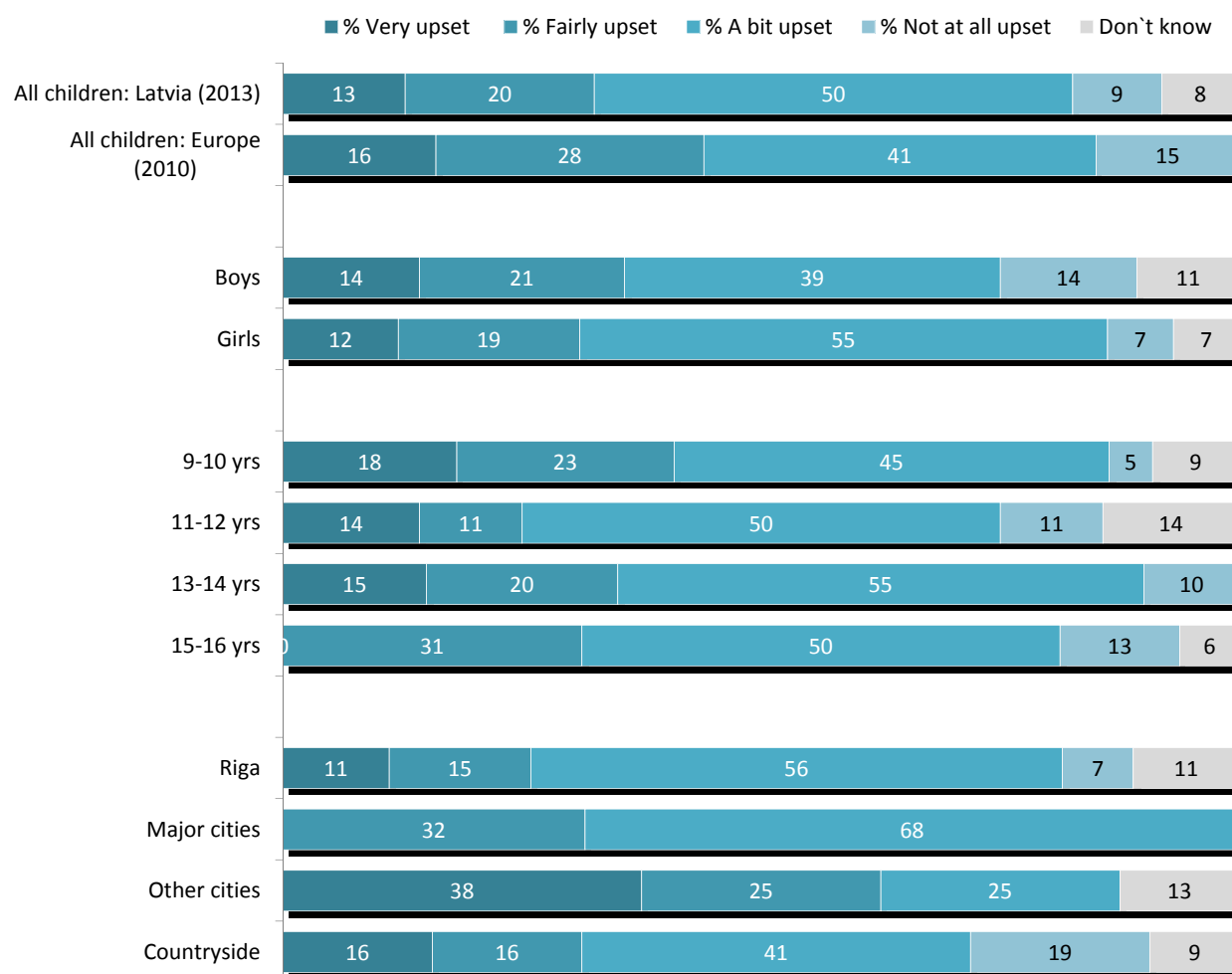
Q: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

Q: In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you seen any thing like this that has bothered you in any way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen them.

*Base:* All children who use the internet; only children who have seen sexual images online.

In total, 13% of the children who had been upset by such images were “very upset”, 20% “fairly upset” but 50% had been “slightly upset”.

**Figure 25: How upset the child felt after seeing sexual images online (children who have been bothered by sexual images online in the past 12 months)**



Q: Thinking about the last time you were bothered [by seeing sexual images online], how upset did you feel about it (if at all)?

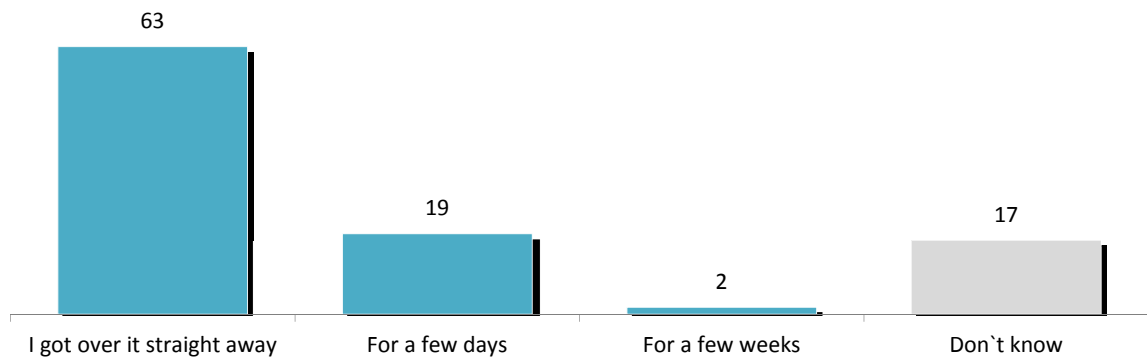
*Base:* All children who have been bothered after seeing a sexual image online in the past 12 months.

Number of respondents less than 30.

Sixty-five per cent of the children in the 11–16 age group who have been upset by material of a sexual nature on the internet admit that they managed to overcome it immediately, but one-fifth admit that they felt upset for a few days.



**Figure 26: For how long the child felt like that after seeing sexual images online (children aged 11+ who have been bothered by sexual images online in the past 12 months)**



Q: Thinking about this time, how long did you feel like that for?

Base: All children who have been bothered after seeing a sexual image online in the past 12 months.

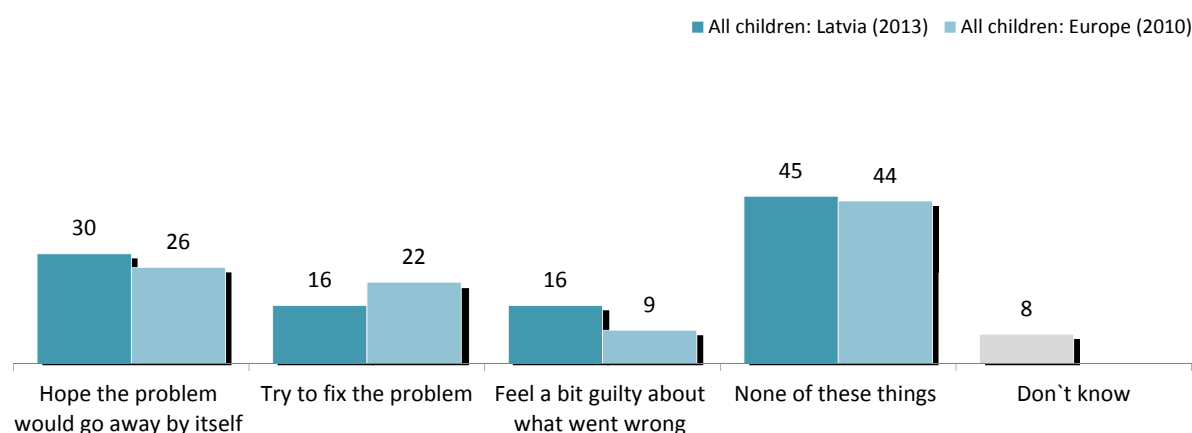
#### **6.4. Coping with sexual images on the internet**

An important question is how children react to situations that bother them, and what strategies they choose to solve the given problem. Therefore, an in-depth analysis was done within the given study, not only about the very fact of a child's confrontation with content posing risk to the child, but also their capacities and approaches to solve problematic situations faced when using the internet and confronting undesirable content. This study analysed children's reaction to problematic situations in three aspects.

First, the *individual and personal reaction of the children was assessed*. The survey questionnaire included three possible individual reactions of children: fatalistic reaction (hoping that the problem will go away by itself), proactive approach (trying to fix the problem themselves), and self-reproaches (blaming themselves for the situation that has occurred).

One-third of the children who have been upset by images of a sexual nature on the internet hoped that their anxiety would pass by itself (which means children chose a fatalistic reaction to the problematic situation), 16% tried to solve it, and 16% felt slightly guilty that something had gone wrong; 45% said they had not done any of the above.

**Figure 27: How the child coped after being bothered by seeing sexual images online (age: 11+)**



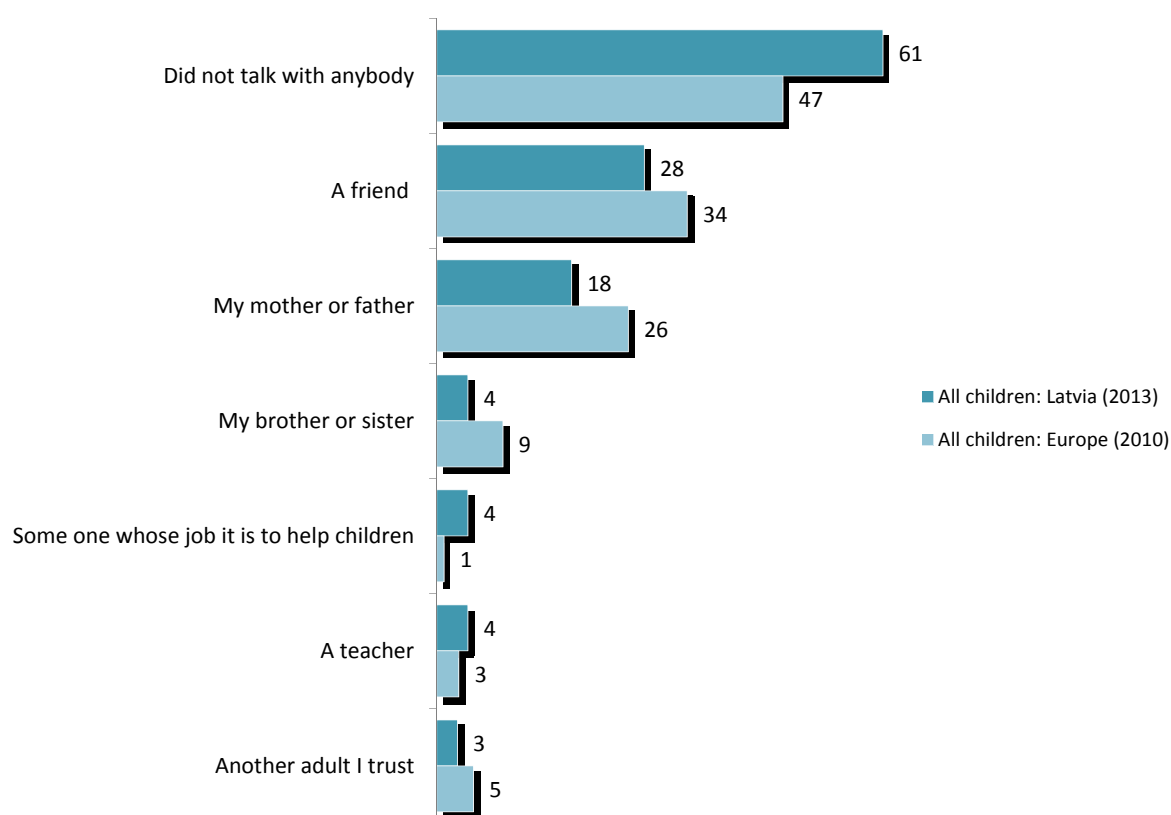
Q: The last time this happened, did you do any of these things afterwards? (multiple responses allowed)

Base: Children aged 11–16 who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing sexual images online.

Second, the *activities of children in looking for social support among people of their own social sphere were assessed*. This is important because one of the postulates of safe internet use is, where there are problems or unpleasant situations, to talk with people close to the person or with professionals who can help. The action of the children in Latvia therefore raises concerns. Sixty-one per cent of the children, after having seen images of a sexual nature on the internet, and having been upset by them, had not spoken to anyone about it (in the EU in 2010 the proportion of such children was 47%); 28% had spoken to a friend but only 18% to parents. Only 4% had spoken to a teacher or someone whose duty is to help.

Teachers and parents are not the primary sources of trust for children concerning internet safety issues, and children try to cope with such problematic issues themselves.

**Figure 28: Who the child talked to after seeing sexual images online (children who have been bothered by such images)**



Q: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing sexual images on the internet], did you talk to anyone about what happened?

Q: Who did you talk to?

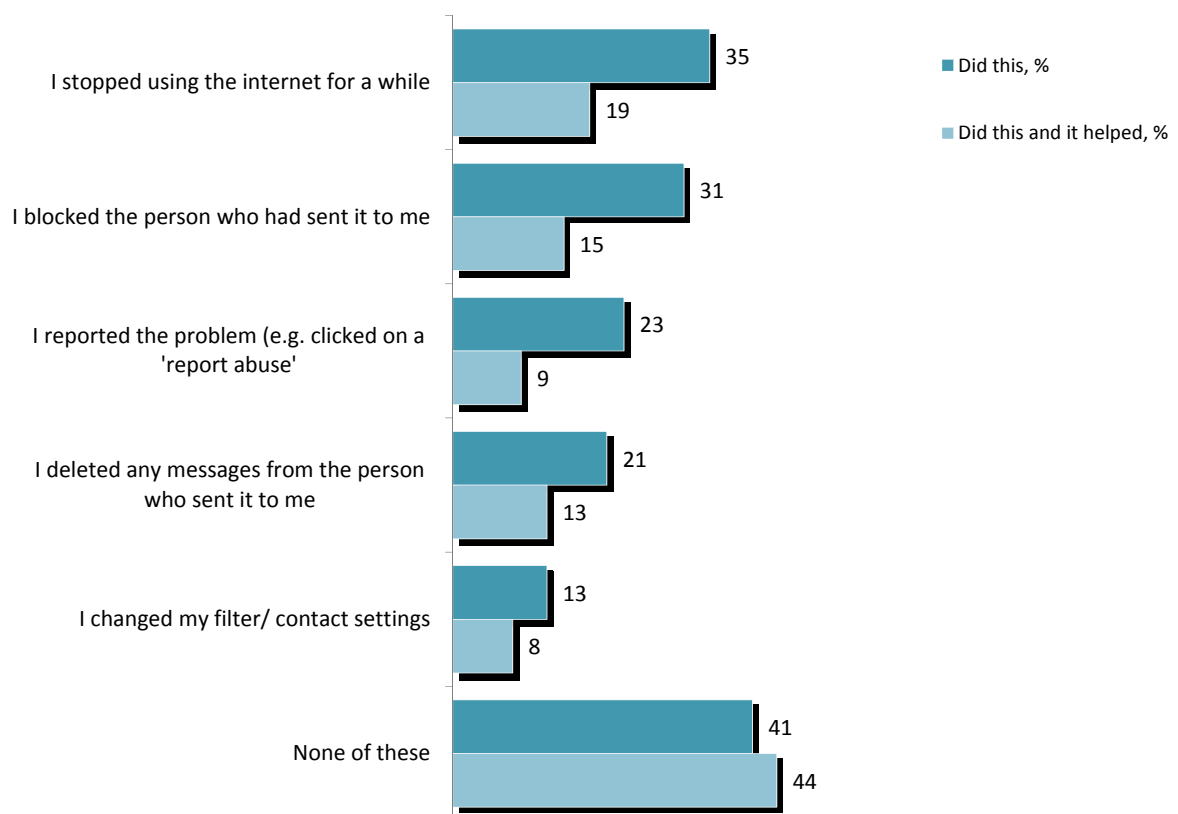
Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing sexual images online.

Third, the study assessed *children's reaction specifically to internet use*. They were asked in the survey questionnaire to indicate whether and how they changed in their internet use as a reaction to seeing content of a sexual nature. New media and internet technologies and services provide different possibilities for ensuring safe use of the internet, and during safe internet use campaigns, children are told about and advised to use these. Consequently, the data from the present survey make it possible to assess to what extent children use them, and if they help. The major goal is for children to have the skills and abilities for safe internet use, instead of children refusing to use the internet because they may also come across undesirable content. It is therefore essential to analyse these two possible reactions in context – whether children

undertake certain activities to ensure safe internet use, or whether they choose, as a solution, to stop using the internet, which creates negative consequences in the long term since children become deprived of access to opportunities provided by the internet.

Thirty-five per cent of the children who had seen images of a sexual nature on the internet had stopped using it for some time, and 31% blocked the person who had sent the images. The proportion of children who had reported a problem to the internet provider is comparatively large, at 23%. At the same time, it is interesting that the approach that could solve the issue is recognised by only 9% of the children, and they consider the activities that have been done by them as more valuable. It indirectly shows that safety measures by ISPs and social networks are insufficient to protect children in such situations.

**Figure 29: What the child did after seeing sexual images online (children who have been bothered by such images)**



Q: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing sexual images on the internet], did you do any of these things?

Q: Which, if any, of the things you did helped you?

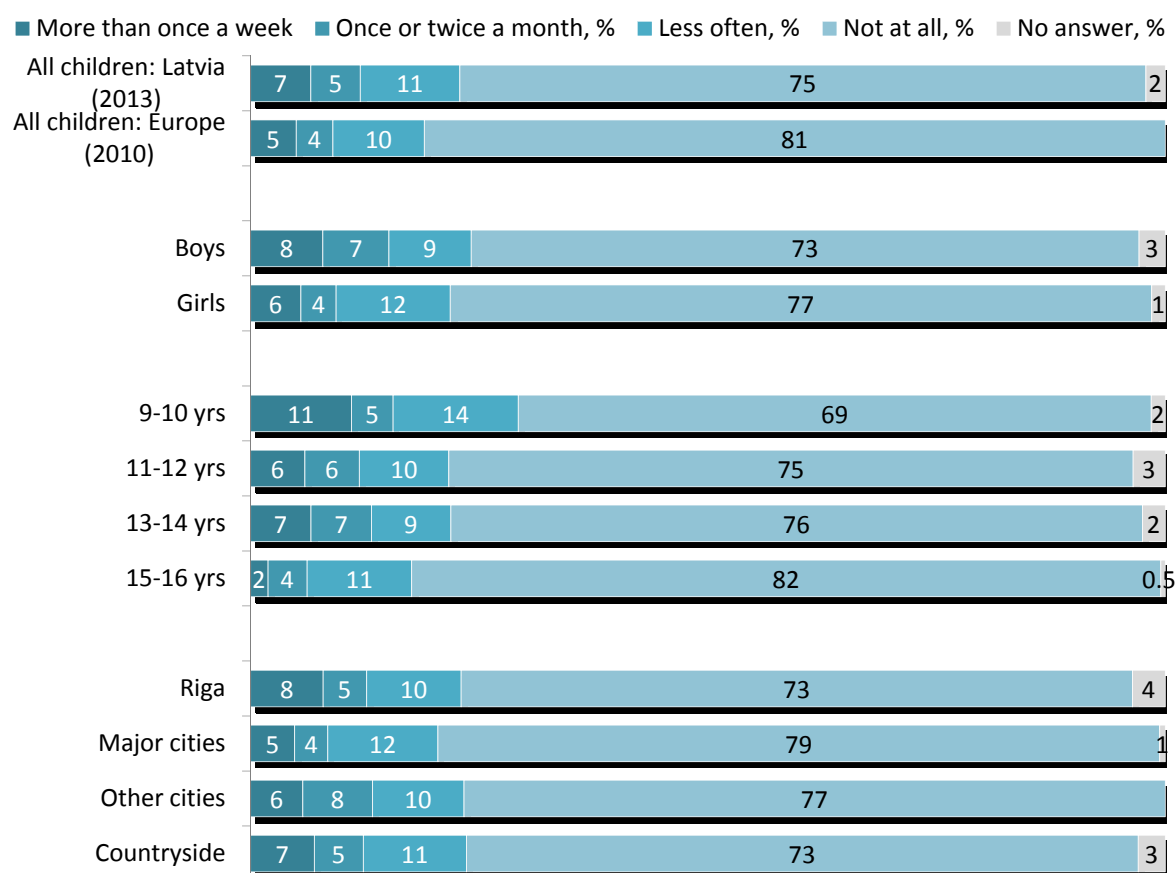
Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing sexual images online.

## 7. Bullying

### 7.1. How often children are bullied

During the previous year 23% of children in Latvia have experienced bullying. The proportion among boys is slightly higher (24%, 22% for girls) and for 9- to 10-year-olds (30%). Approximately one in ten have experienced bullying more often than once a week.

**Figure 30: Child has been bullied online or offline in the past 12 months**



Q: Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months?

Q: How often has someone acted in this kind of way [hurtful and nasty] towards you in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet.

### 7.2. How children are bullied

Most frequently children are bullied when meeting with people face-to-face (14%). Less than half (7%) have experienced such abuse via the internet, and 5% via a mobile phone. Abuse via the internet has been experienced more often by girls (especially in

the 9–10 and 13–14 age groups), while face-to-face abuse has been experienced more often by boys (especially in 9-12 age groups).

**Table 6: Ways in which children have been bullied, by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
In person face-to-face	14	13	25	14	17	11	12	13	9	9
On the internet	7	6	4	7	7	6	7	13	10	7
By mobile phone	5	3	4	3	6	6	4	9	6	7
Other way	10		4	9	7	9	13	16	13	8
<b>Has been bullied at all</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>

Q: At any time during the last 12 months, has this happened [that you have been treated in a hurtful or nasty way]?

Q: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

### 7.3. In what ways children are bullied online

Bullying online can occur in different ways. The more children use the internet (for example, social networks), the more chance they will experience bullying: 3% are abused via social networks and/or in chatrooms, 2% from direct messages. It must be taken into account that types of abuse depend directly on the type of internet possibilities used by children – the wider the internet opportunities, the more chance there is to confront abuse.

**Table 7: Children have been bullied online in the past 12 months, by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia ((2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
On a social networking site	3	3	2	2	2	1	4	9	3	3
In a chatroom	3	1	1	3	2	2	5	3	4	3
By instant messaging	2	3	0	1	2	2	0	4	2	3
On a gaming site	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	1	0
By email	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0
Some other way on the internet	1		0	0	2	0	0	4	2	1
<b>At all on the internet</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

Q: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet?

Q: In which ways has this happened to you in the last 12 months?

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

**Table 8: What happened when child was bullied online in the past 12 months, by age and gender (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Nasty or hurtful messages were sent to me	5	4			2	4	5	9	5	4
I was threatened on the internet	1	1			2	1	0	3	3	1
Nasty or hurtful messages about me were passed around or posted where others could see them	1	2			2	0	3	1	2	0
I was left out or excluded from a group or activity on the internet	1	1			2	0	1	4	0	1
Other nasty or hurtful things on the internet	2	2			2	1	1	3	2	3
Something else	1	1			1	1	1	3	1	0
<b>At all on the internet</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>			<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

Q: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet?

Q: Can I just check which of these things have happened in the last 12 months?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

Children aged 11–16 who were asked to specify the type of abuse they had experienced via the internet admitted that they had received unpleasant or offensive messages or mail (5%). It was experienced comparatively more frequently by girls (in particular, 13- to 14-year-olds).

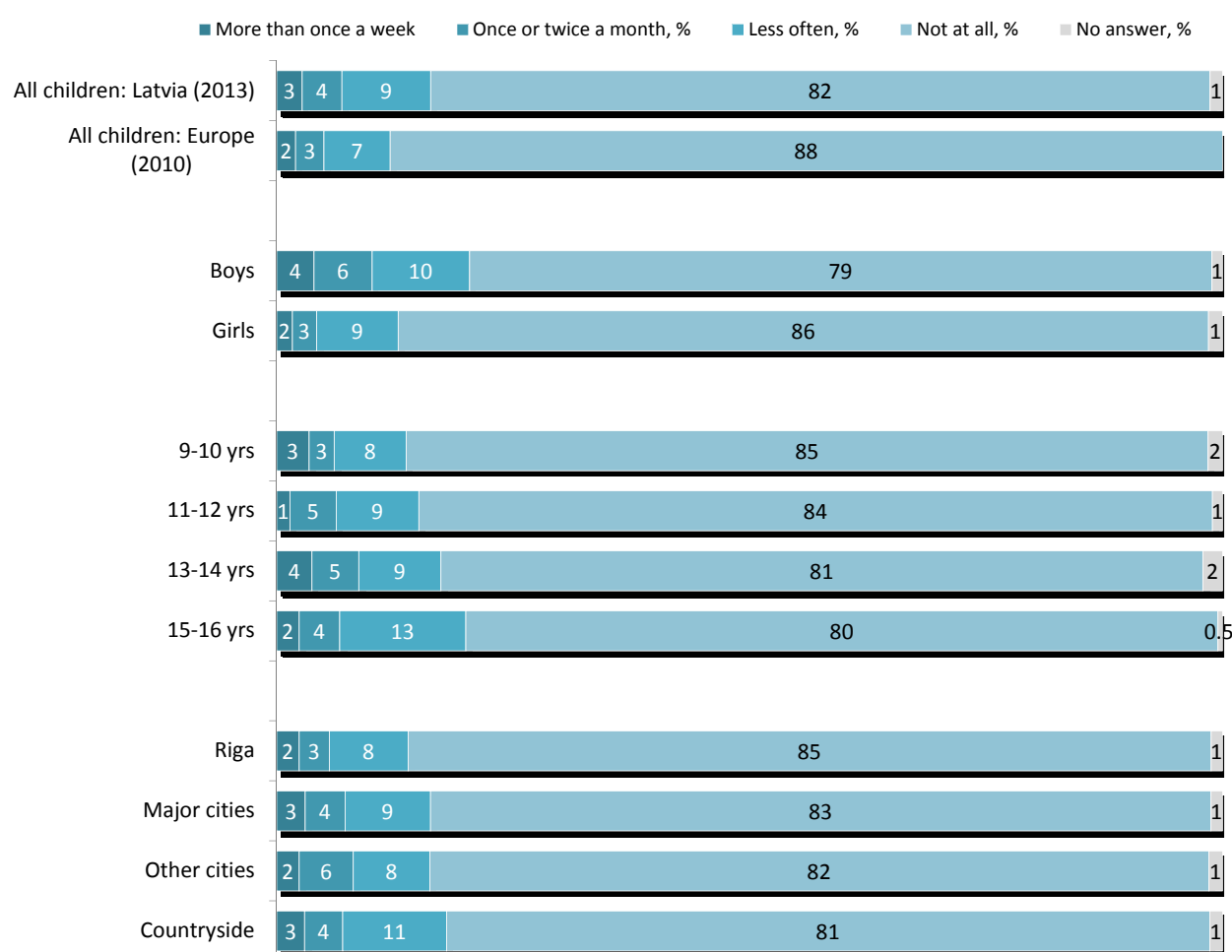
#### **7.4. When/how children bully others**

The survey also included questions to assess if the respondents had abused others: 16% admitted that they had maltreated other children, and during the last year 3% had done it more often than once a week, 4% once or twice a month and 9% more rarely. They were more often boys and older children.



In view of the fact that 23% of children admitted that they had been victims of abuse, only 16% admitted that they had done it themselves; it is possible to conclude that children more often admit abuse committed by others than by themselves. Another interpretation can also be presented – children do not consider their maltreatment of others as important, and do not identify it as abuse, while maltreatment of them by others is seen as abuse.

**Figure 31: Child has bullied others online or offline in the past 12 months**



Q: Have you acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else in the past 12 months?

Q: How often have you acted in this kind of way [hurtful and nasty] in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet.

The ways children have bullied others, as shown by the data, are similar to the ways they have been bullied themselves: most often it has happened meeting someone face-to-face (11%), but 4% of children have bullied others via the internet. In the 9–14 age

group, others have been bullied more frequently by boys, but in the 15–16 age group, more by girls.

**Table 9: How child has bullied others in the past 12 months, by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
In person face-to-face	11	10	13	7	14	6	14	10	11	14
On the internet	4	3	2	3	2	2	5	5	4	6
By mobile phone	3	2	2	0	2	2	3	8	4	6
Other way	3		4	1	4	2	3	2	3	4
<b>Has bullied others at all, online or offline</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>

Q: Have you acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else in the past 12 months?

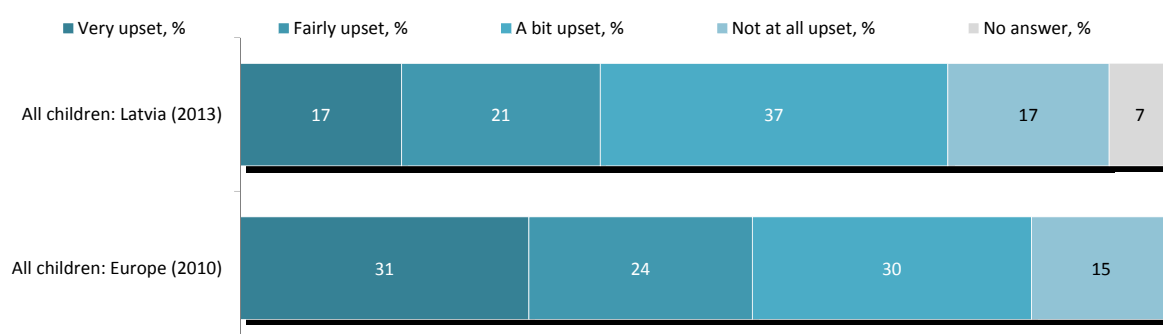
Q: In which of the following ways have you [acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else] in the past 12 months?

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

## 7.5. Perceived harm from being bullied online

From the children who had been abused, 38% felt “very” or “considerably” upset, 37% “slightly” upset, and only 17% were “not upset at all”. Girls were considerably more upset than boys.

**Figure 32: How upset the child felt after being bullied online (children who have been bullied online in the past 12 months)**



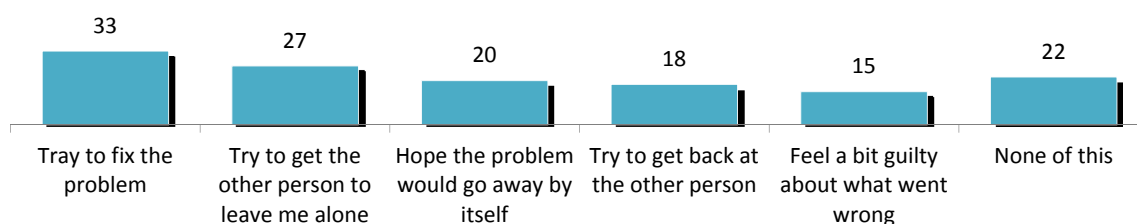
Q: Thinking about the last time [you were sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet], how upset were you about what happened (if at all)?

Base: All children who have been bullied on the internet in the past 12 months.

## 7.6. Coping with being bullied online

Unlike the situations when children had been confronted with material of a sexual nature on the internet, when confronted with abuse, children were more proactive, and one-third tried to solve it themselves instead of hoping that the problem would resolve itself. Only one-fifth hoped that the problem would vanish, 18% had tried to take revenge, and 15% felt slightly guilty about what happened.

**Figure 33: How the child coped after being bullied online (age: 11+)**

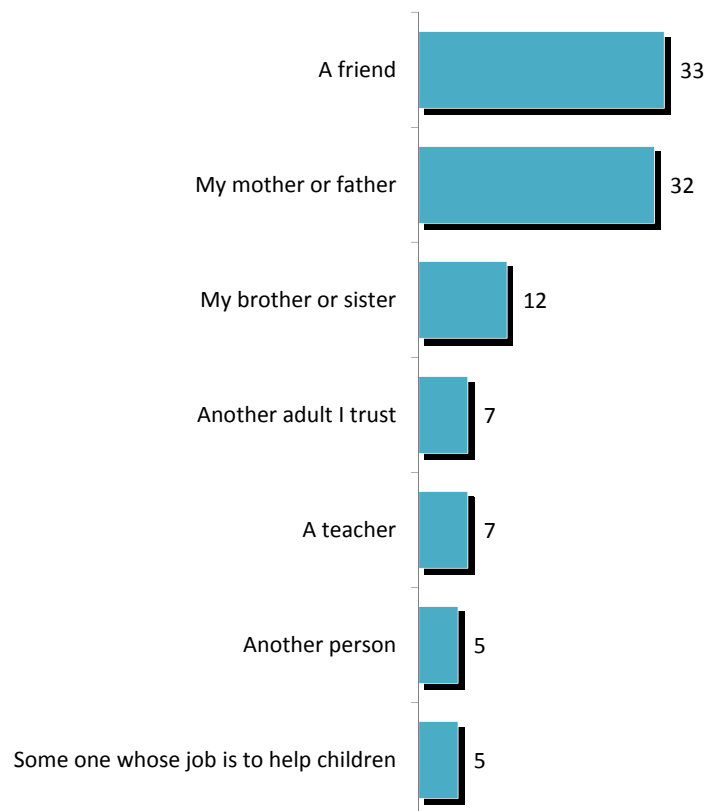


Q: The last time this happened, did you do any of these things afterwards?

Base: All surveyed children in the 11–16 age group who have been bothered by bullying via the internet ( $n = 60$ ).

If confronting content of a sexual nature made them upset, 61% of the children had not talked about it to anyone, and only one-third had kept quiet about it; 33% talked about it with a friend and 32% with a parent.

**Figure 34: Who the child talked to after being bullied online**



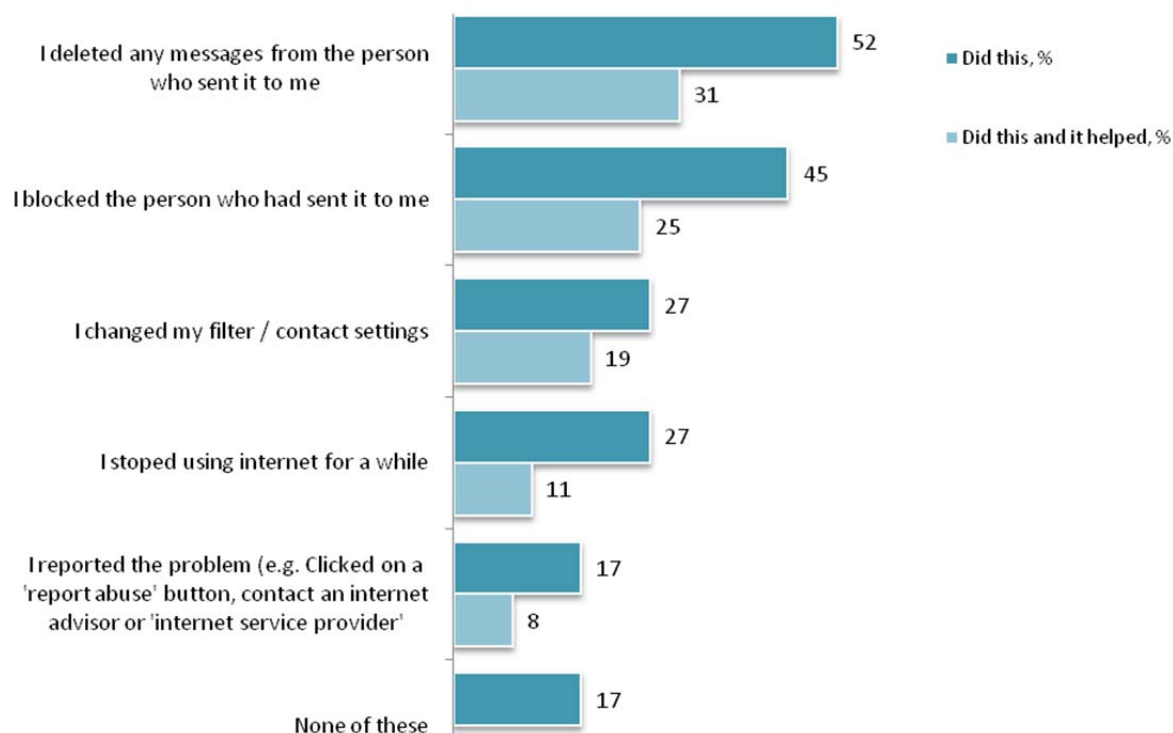
Q: Thinking about [the last time you were sent hurtful or nasty messages on the internet], did you talk to anyone about what happened?

Q: Who did you talk to?

*Base:* All the surveyed children in the 11–16 age group who have been bullied via the internet ( $n = 75$ ).

Unlike problematic situations that are to do with confronting content of a sexual nature on the internet, in cases of abuse, children are capable of carrying out much more decisive activities to solve such problems: 52% deleted all the messages from the offender and 45% blocked the person to disable communication from them. About one-fifth changed their privacy settings or contact information and/or stopped using the internet for some time. Children have admitted that these were the activities that helped them in a specific situation.

**Figure 35: What the child did after being bullied online**



Q: Thinking about [the last time you were sent hurtful or nasty messages on the internet], did you talk to anyone about what happened?

Q: Who did you talk to?

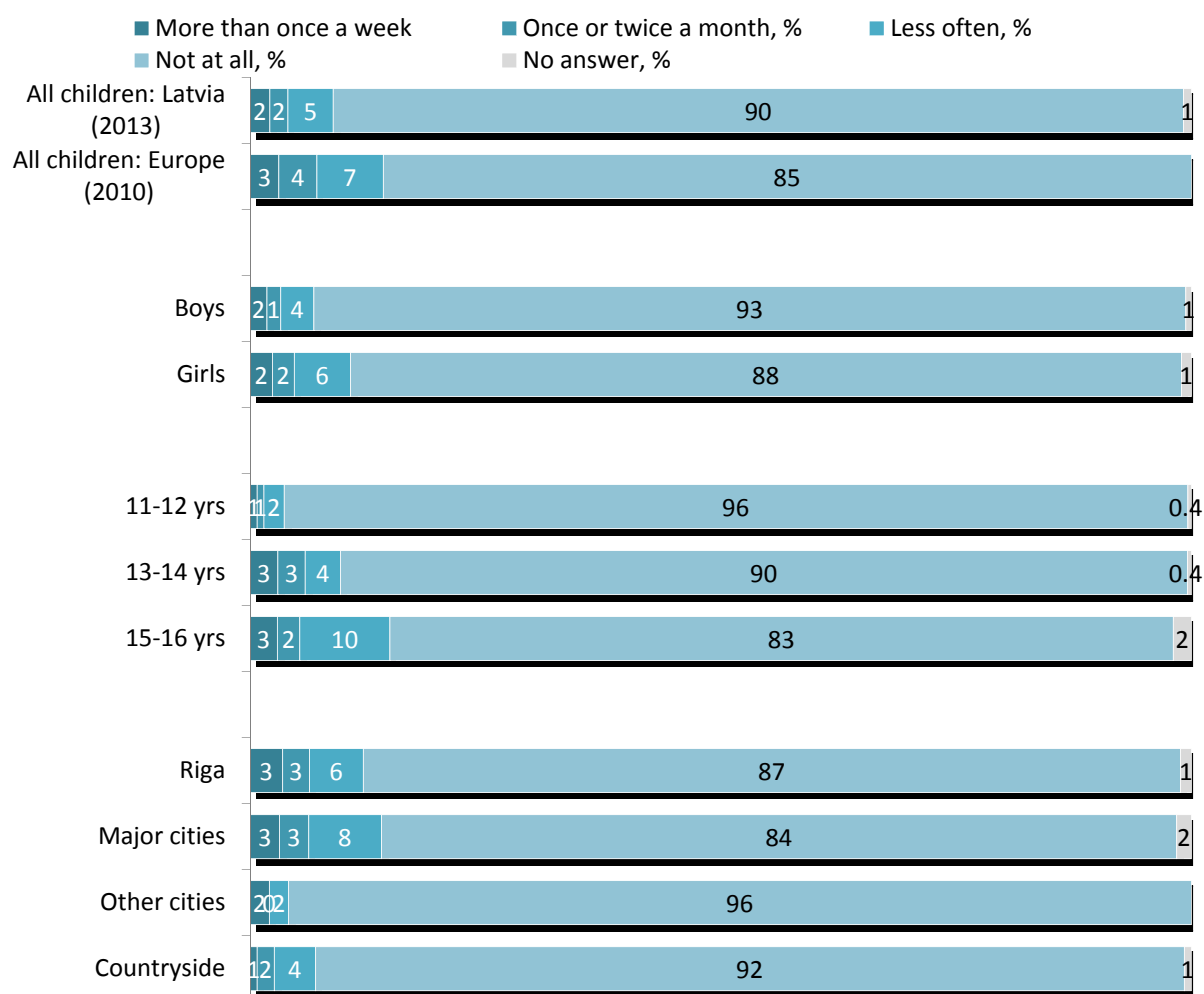
*Base:* All the surveyed children in the 11–16 age group who have been bullied via the internet ( $n = 75$ ).

## 8. Sending/receiving sexual messages

### 8.1. Children's experience of sexual messages online

Messages of a sexual nature had only been received by 9% of the children during the last year (2% regularly, more than once a week, 2% once or twice a month, 5% more rarely). More often such messages were received by girls (10%, 7% for a while), as well as older children (15% of those aged 15–16), and those who live in cities.

**Figure 36: Child has seen or received sexual messages online in the past 12 months (age: 11+)**



Q: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet?

Q: How often have you received sexual messages of any kind on the internet in the past 12 months? This could be words, pictures or videos.

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

Six per cent of the children have received a message of a sexual nature via email, or 4% have seen a message of a sexual nature posted on an internet site where everyone can see it.

**Table 10: Kinds of sexual messaging child has encountered online in the past 12 months, by age and gender (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	11–12		13–14		15–16	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Boys	Girls	Boys
I have been sent a sexual message on the internet	6	1	2	6	7	5	16
I have seen a sexual message posted where other people could see it on the internet	4	0	1	2	5	4	12
I have been asked to talk about sexual acts with someone on the internet	3	0	1	3	3	2	11
I have seen other people perform sexual acts	2	0	1	2	4	3	4
I have been asked on the internet for a photo or video showing my private parts	2	0	1	2	4	0	6
<b>Have seen or received at all</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>

Q: In the past 12 months, have any of these happened to you on the internet?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

Five per cent of the children most frequently saw a message of a sexual nature on SNSs, or for 4% they had simply “popped-up”. These data repeatedly testify that SNSs are the most significant risk factor for safe use of the internet, but on the other hand, it is an internet environment that can be controlled. What causes greater concern are the messages of a sexual nature that simply pop up, because this type of activity is much more difficult monitor and prevent.

**Table 11: How the child saw or received sexual messages online (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	11–12		13–14		15–16	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
On a social networking site	5	1	2	5	6	3	14
By a ‘pop-up’	4	0	3	3	3	3	9
In a chatroom	3	0	1	2	2	3	9
By instant messaging	2	0	1	1	3	0	8
By email	2	1	1	2	2	3	4
On a gaming website	1	2	1	3	1	0	3
Some other way on the internet	2	0	0	3	3	1	3
<b>Have seen or received at all</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>

Q: Thinking about the times in the LAST 12 MONTHS that you have seen or received a sexual message on the internet, how has this happened?

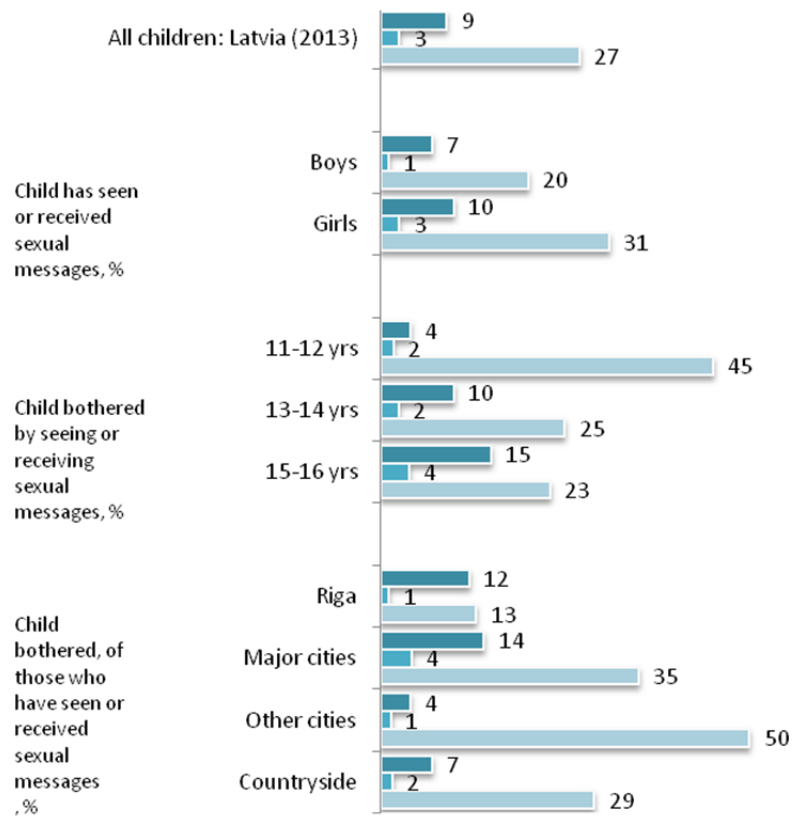
*Base:* All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

## 8.2. Perceived harm from sexual messaging online

Nine per cent of the children had received messages of a sexual nature via the internet during the last year, and 3% had been upset about it. Twenty-seven per cent were upset after having received such messages. Girls were more often upset, as well as younger children (45% among 11- to 12-year-olds), as were those living in small towns (50%) – these are the groups subject to the greatest risks.



**Figure 37: Child has seen or received sexual messages online in the past 12 months and was bothered by this (age: 11+)**



Q: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos.

Q: Have any of the sexual messages that you have seen or received bothered you in any way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it?

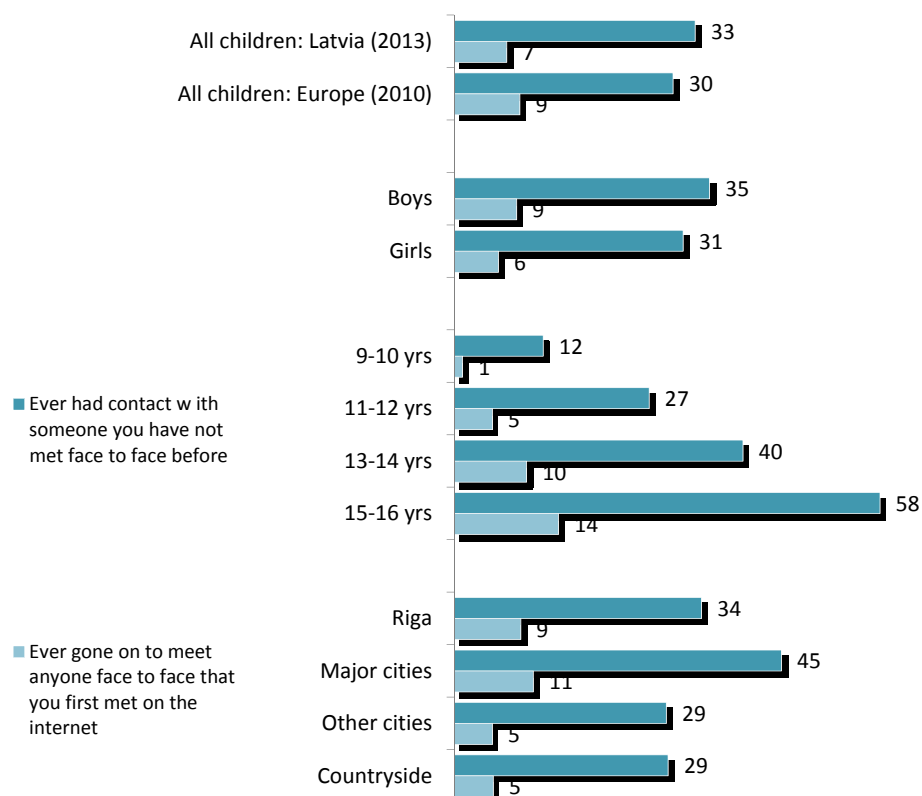
Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet; children aged 11–16 who have seen or received sexual messages online in the past 12 months.

## 9. Meeting new people

### 9.1. Meeting online contacts offline

One-third of children in Latvia have got in touch via the internet with someone they had never met face-to-face. This was done comparatively more often by boys (35%), 15- to 16-year-olds (58%), and those living in big cities (45%), but only 7% have met someone face-to-face whom they first dated via the internet, and more often this was done by 15- to 16-year-olds (14%). Fifty-one per cent had met people that they had not known previously and with whom they had no contact, and 40% with people who were friends of someone they knew, or a relative. The situation in Latvia is opposite to EU research in 2010 that concluded that children had met more frequently someone who was familiar to them than with people they had become acquainted with only via the internet.

**Figure 38: Child has communicated online with, or gone to an offline meeting with, someone not met face-to-face before**



Q: Can I just check, have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face-to-face before?

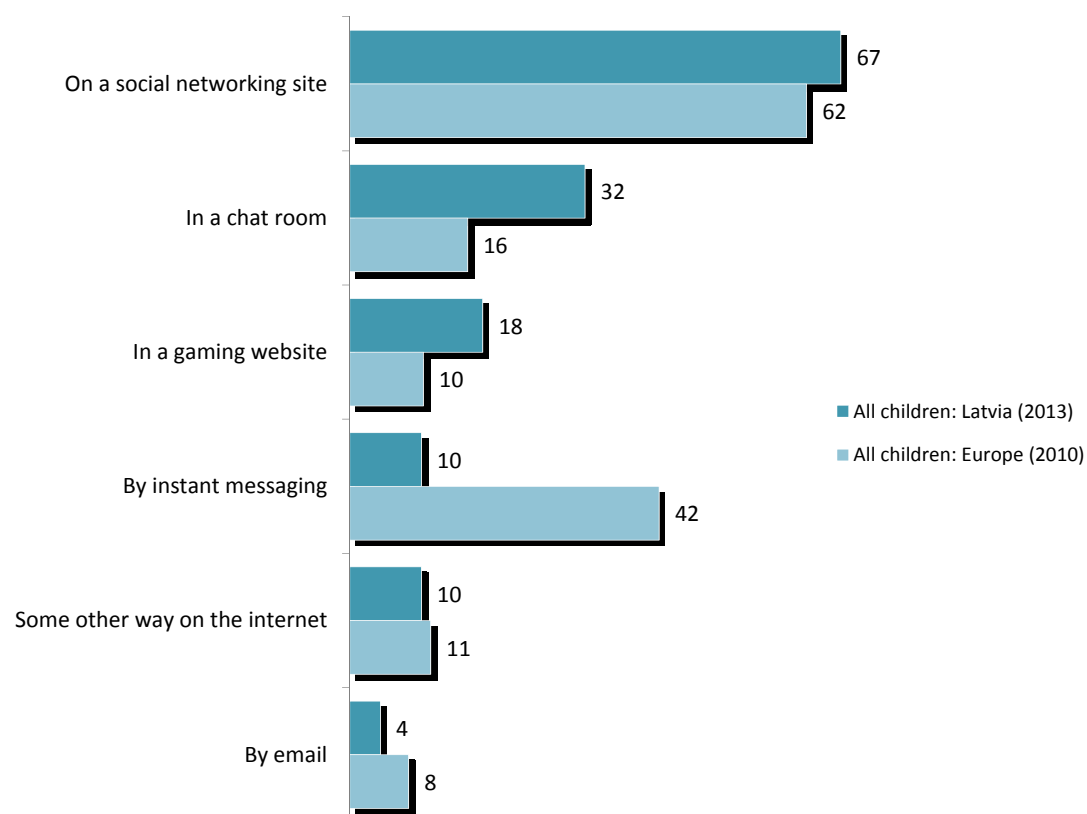
Q: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Most of the children who have met people with whom they became acquainted on the internet have only met one to two people (61%), one in five children have met with three to four people, but one in ten have met with five or more. Boys have met comparatively more people. Fifty-one per cent of the children who met people with whom they became acquainted via the internet had met people previously unknown to them and with whom they had had no previous association, and 40% with people who were friends or relatives of someone they knew. It should be taken into account that these data refer only to 7% of children in Latvia who use the internet, and henceforward only this group of respondents is analysed. Expressly high is the number of girls who met with total strangers – 67% met total strangers and 24% met people who were relatives or friends of people familiar to the girls. The indicators among boys are the opposite – 38% and 54% respectively. Only 2% of those who met total strangers felt anxious. Among those who met such people, the proportion of those who felt anxious was 33%. Girls were more often agitated about such meetings (45%), 9- to 10-year-olds (67%), and inhabitants of rural areas (50%).

Most often the people whom children have met face-to-face they became acquainted with via SNSs (67%) or chatrooms (32%). One-fifth had become acquainted via gaming sites.

**Figure 39: The way in which the child first contacted someone they met offline (children who met someone offline that they first communicated with online)**



Q: Thinking about any people you have gone on to meet with in the last 12 months who you first met on the internet, in what ways did you first get in contact with them?

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 10. Other risk factors

### 10.1. Potentially harmful user-generated content

Among children from the 11–16 age group, 25% have seen internet sites where discussions take place about how to become very thin, 21% have seen sites with hate messages targeting certain groups of individuals or individuals directly, 15% where participants discuss ways of self-inflicted injuries or physical pain, 11% where people discuss their drug misuse, and 9% where ways of committing suicide are discussed. This shows that over the last few years such content has become more accessible.

Such web pages have been seen comparatively more often by 15- to 16-year-olds, but also, among 11- to 12-year-olds, at least one in every ten children has come across such sites. Potentially harmful user-generated content has been seen more by girls.

**Table 12: Child has seen potentially harmful user-generated content on websites in the past 12 months (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	11–12	13–14	15–16
Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic)	25	10	15	21	40
Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals	21	12	13	19	34
Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves	15	7	9	18	21
Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs	11	7	4	15	16
Ways of committing suicide	9	5	6	12	11

Q: In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss...?

Base: All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

**Table 13: Child has seen potentially harmful user-generated content on websites in the past 12 months, by age and gender (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic)	25	10	15	16	17	27	29	50
Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals	21	12	11	15	20	18	32	36
Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves	15	7	11	8	15	21	15	27
Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs	11	7	4	4	13	17	18	14
Ways of committing suicide	9	5	7	4	10	14	7	14

Q: In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss...?

*Base:* All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

## 10.2. Personal data misuse

About one-tenth of children in the 11–16 age group have faced a situation when someone has used their password in order to get information about them or pretended to be them, and/or situations when someone has used their personal data in an unpleasant way. Differences among age and gender groups are not marked. Unlike the previously examined data about dissemination on the internet of content created by potentially dangerous users, there are no marked differences in abuse of personal data between the EU 2010 study and research done in Latvia. Yet it cannot be interpreted as evidence that this problem is not increasing, although it enables us to conclude that it is not so widespread as availability of dangerous content.

**Table 14: Child has experienced misuse of personal data in the past 12 months, by age and gender (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Boys	Girls	Boys
Somebody used my password to access my information or pretended to be me	9	7	7	12	10	7	6	9
Somebody used my personal information in a way I didn't like	8	4	6	10	9	7	5	9
I lost money by being cheated on the internet	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1

Q: In the past 12 months, has any of the following happened to you on the internet?

*Base:* All children aged 11–16 who use the internet.

## 11. Mediation

### 11.1. Parents

Eighty per cent of the children assert that their parents are doing some activities to monitor their internet use. Sixty per cent of the parents discuss what children do on the internet. About half of the parents are nearby when children use the internet, and 34% work on the internet together with the child. Survey data show that girls' internet use is supervised more often, and the supervision is more stringent in the 9–12 age group. Although these indicators are high, in the 2010 EU children's survey, 87% of the children admitted that their parents supervise their internet use – this enables us to conclude, implicitly, that parents in Latvia are comparatively less involved in supervising their children's safe use of the internet. We must take into account here that the data represent evaluations provided by the children, and cannot be interpreted as a fully-fledged indicator of supervision performed by parents.

**Table 15: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet use, by age and gender**

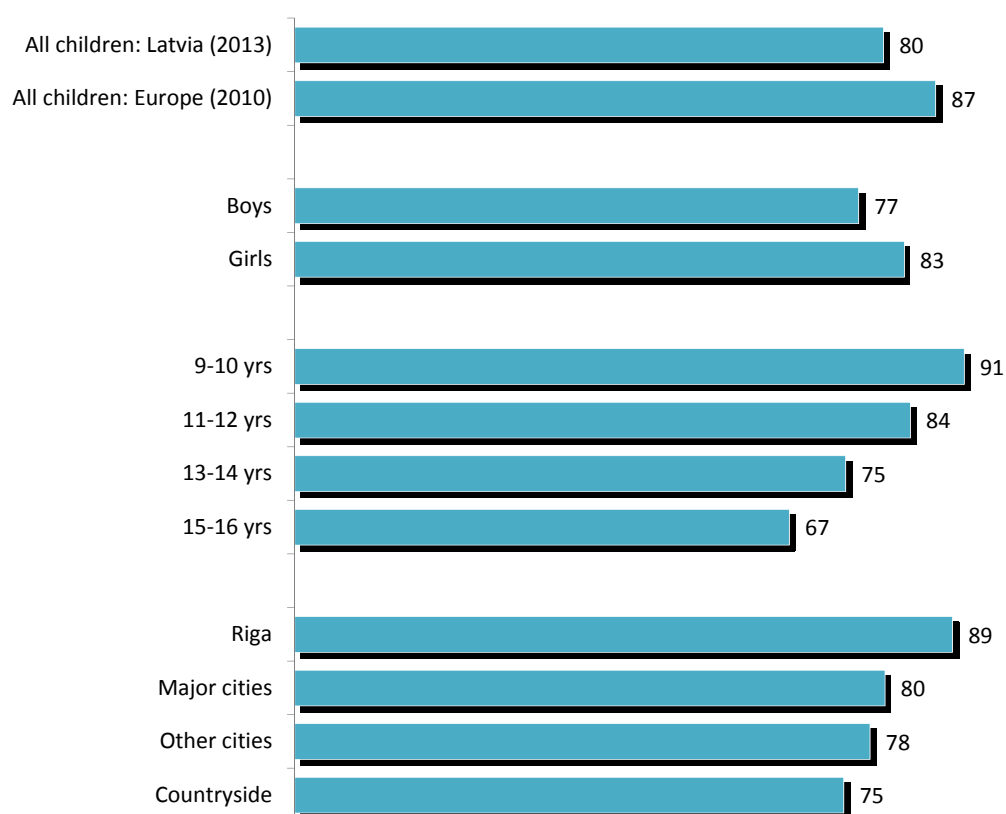
%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Talk to you about what you do on the internet	60	70	74	78	65	61	49	48	39	56
Stay nearby when you use the internet	51	58	68	68	50	55	46	44	28	41
Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own	41	47	58	57	42	42	37	33	24	27
Sit with you while you use the internet	34	42	45	56	36	41	29	18	16	20
Do shared activities together with you on the internet	19	44	24	35	20	19	14	10	7	12
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>77</b>

Q: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes...?

Base: All children who use the internet.



**Figure 40: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet use, by age and gender**



Q: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes...

Base: All children who use the internet.

Sixty-four per cent of parents have helped children when they had difficulties finding something on the internet, 58% have explained why some internet sites are good or bad, 57% have suggested ways of treating others on the internet, but 50% have suggested safe use of the internet. More frequently parents have helped girls, younger children and children living in large cities.

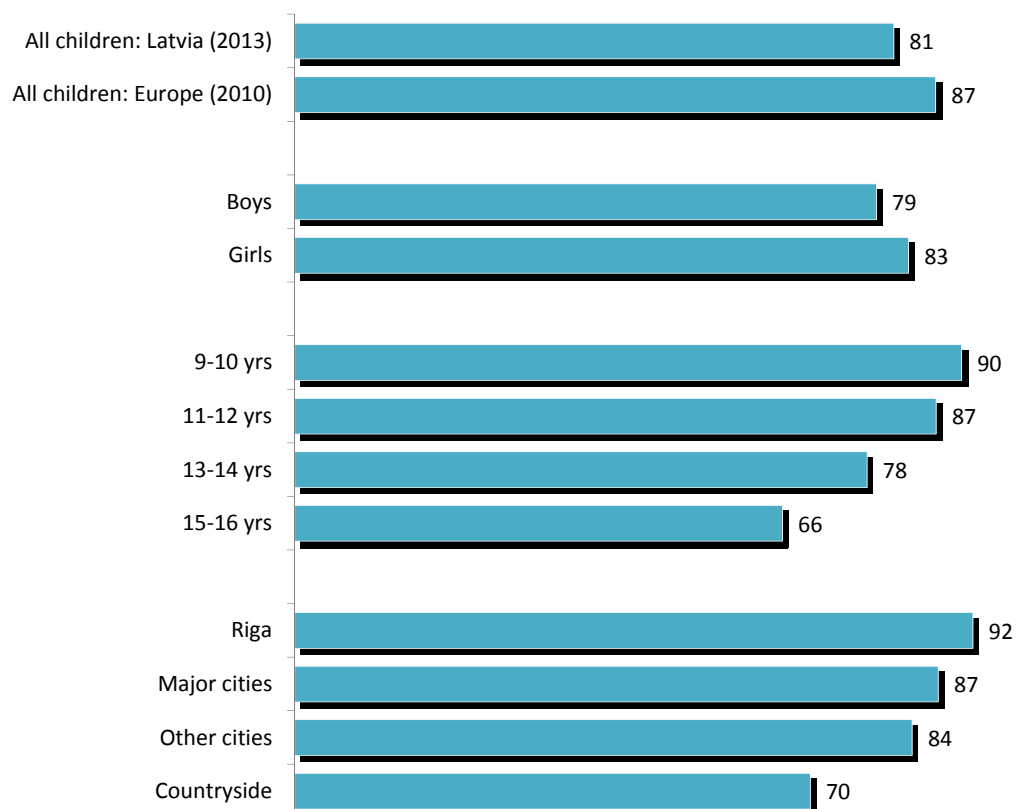
**Table 16: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet safety, by age and gender**

%	Latvia All: (2013)	Europe All: (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Helped you when something was difficult to do or find on the internet	64	66	79	89	73	73	48	61	39	37
Explained why some websites are good or bad	58	68	62	75	63	70	51	50	40	39
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	57	56	58	72	59	62	55	50	36	53
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	50	63	53	62	53	59	48	42	32	37
Helped you in the past when something bothered you on the internet	46	36	47	67	48	61	33	39	28	34
Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you	46	52	47	67	49	61	37	37	21	34
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>71</b>

Q: Has your parent/have either of your parents ever done the following things with you...?

Base: All children who use the internet.

**Figure 41: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet safety**



Q: Has your parent/have either of your parents ever done the following things with you...?

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

For 74% of the children, their parents have forbidden them to provide others with personal information without their permission. No more than one-third of the parents set other types of restrictions for their children. The majority of the most frequent activities on the internet (uploading of photographs, music and film downloads, chatting, creating a profile on SNSs) children perform independently, without supervision.

From the social and demographic perspective it can be observed that parents' control and restrictions are distinct for the 9–10 age group, but considerably weaker in the older age groups, and for the 15- to 16-year-olds, it is minimal.

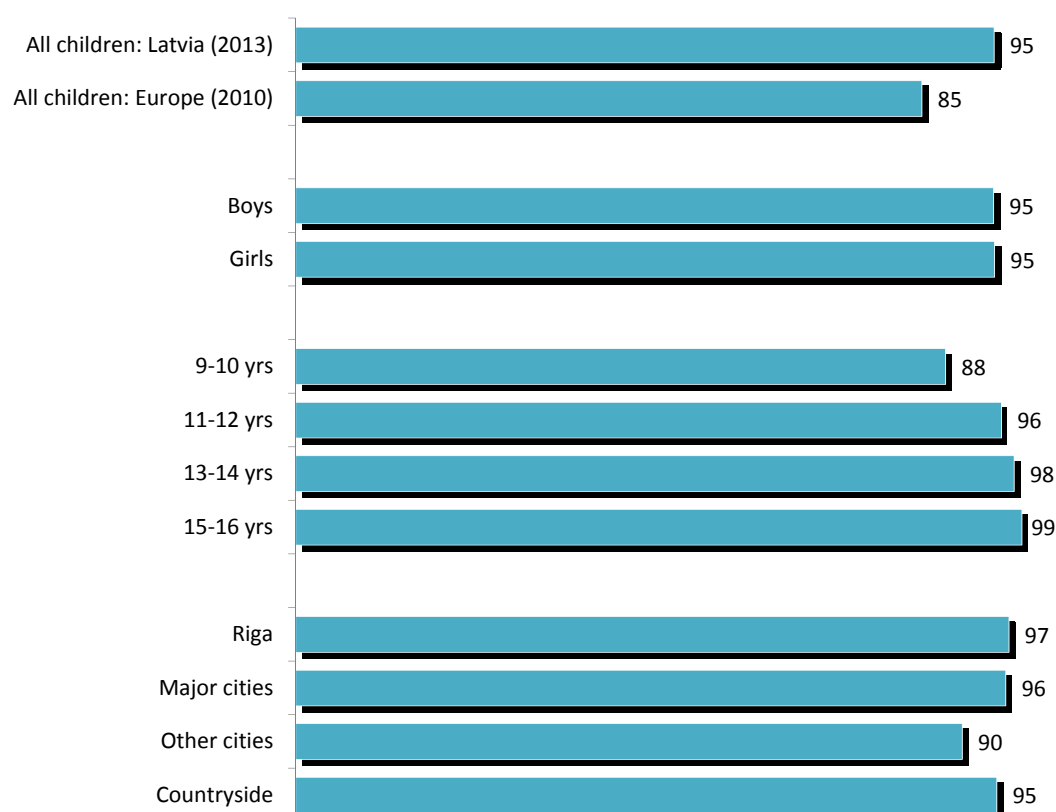
**Table 17: Parents' restrictive mediation of the child's internet use**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Give out personal information to others on the internet	74	85	79	87	75	77	77	71	53	60
Upload photos, videos or music to share with others	37	63	60	69	38	44	28	18	11	12
Download music or films on the internet	30	57	50	67	33	37	18	15	4	2
Use instant messaging	26	38	45	48	27	29	21	13	7	9
Have your own social networking profile	25	47	38	62	24	27	13	12	4	4
Watch video clips on the internet	20	39	32	49	18	26	14	8	2	2
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>98</b>

Q: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with your parent's permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them.

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

**Figure 42: Parents' restrictive mediation of the child's internet use**



Q: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with your parent's permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them.

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

Forty per cent of the parents, according to the children's evaluation, control what children do on the internet: 27% check the sites visited by children, 25% check children's profiles on SNSs, 22% what people the child adds to their profile on SNSs, and 8% check the child's email. There is more control for the 9–10 age group, but as the children's age increases, control diminishes. It is interesting that there is more control over boys in the 11–14 age group, but more in the 9–10 and 15–16 age groups for girls.

As mentioned earlier, parents' control over internet use by their children in Latvia is much lower than in the EU. While in Latvia 40% of children admit that their parents actively control their internet use, in the EU 2010 study, half of the children provided such an assessment. The data from this study show that parents' supervision and control in Latvia is more frequently linked with discussing with children what safe internet use is, and more rarely, with specific, practical supervision activities.

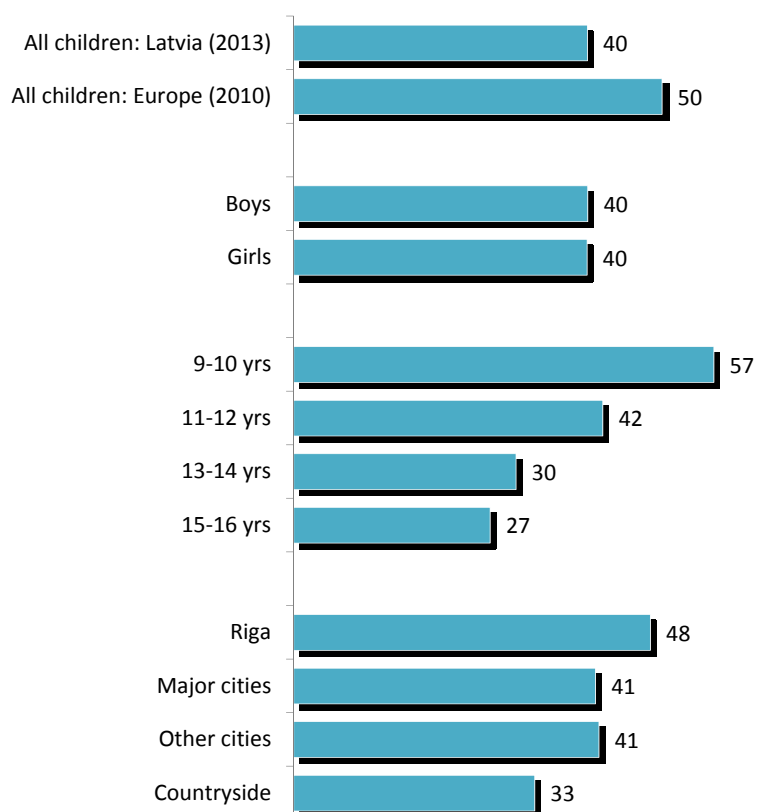
**Table 18: Parent's monitoring of the child's internet use, by age and gender**

%	Latvia All: (2013)	Europe All: (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Which websites you visited	27	46	42	46	28	30	25	11	15	9
Your profile on a social networking site or online community	25	40	36	44	27	24	17	19	12	18
Which friends or contacts you add to your social networking profile	22	36	40	34	24	24	15	11	12	13
The messages in your email or instant messaging account	8	25	8	14	11	9	8	3	3	5
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>

Q: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things?

*Base:* All children who use the internet at home

**Figure 43: Parent's monitoring of the child's internet use**



Q: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things...?

Base: All children who use the internet at home.

In total, 41% of the children mentioned during the survey that their parents used various technical means to control or monitor their internet use. Fifty-one per cent used software that protects them from spam or viruses, 18% checked what websites children had visited, 17% used software limiting the child's time spent on the internet but 14% had looked at the possibilities of blocking or filtering different types of internet sites. There are no distinct differences between gender and age groups, but it can be seen that parents of children residing in large cities more often use technical means for controlling their child's internet use.

**Table 19: Parents' technical mediation of the child's internet use, by age and gender (age: 11+)**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	11–12		13–14		15–16	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Boys	Girls	Boys
Software to prevent spam/junk mail or viruses	51	59	51	50	52	41	54
Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites you visit	18	27	16	14	12	15	21
A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet	17	24	14	20	13	23	9
Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website	14	17	9	16	9	15	21
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>59</b>

Q: Does your parent/do either of your parents make use of the following?

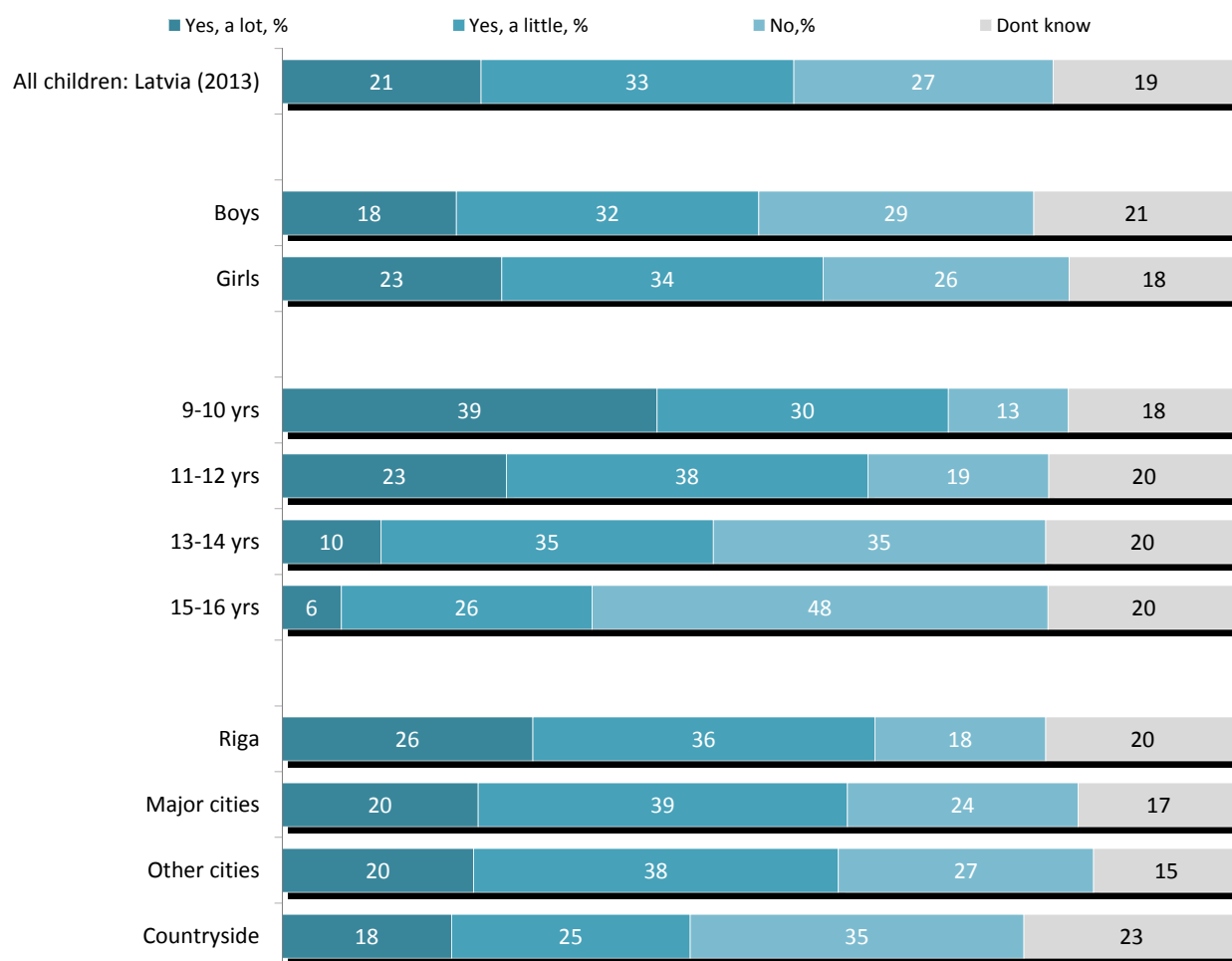
Base: All children who use the internet at home.

## 11.2. Judging parental mediation

In general, 54% of children admit that their parents' supervision helps them in using the internet – 21% expressed that it helped a lot, and 33% claim that it helped a little; 27% considered that it did not help at all, but 19% were unable to provide a specific evaluation. Girls' assessment of usefulness of such supervision and the assessments by younger age groups are higher.



**Figure 44: Whether parental mediation is helpful**

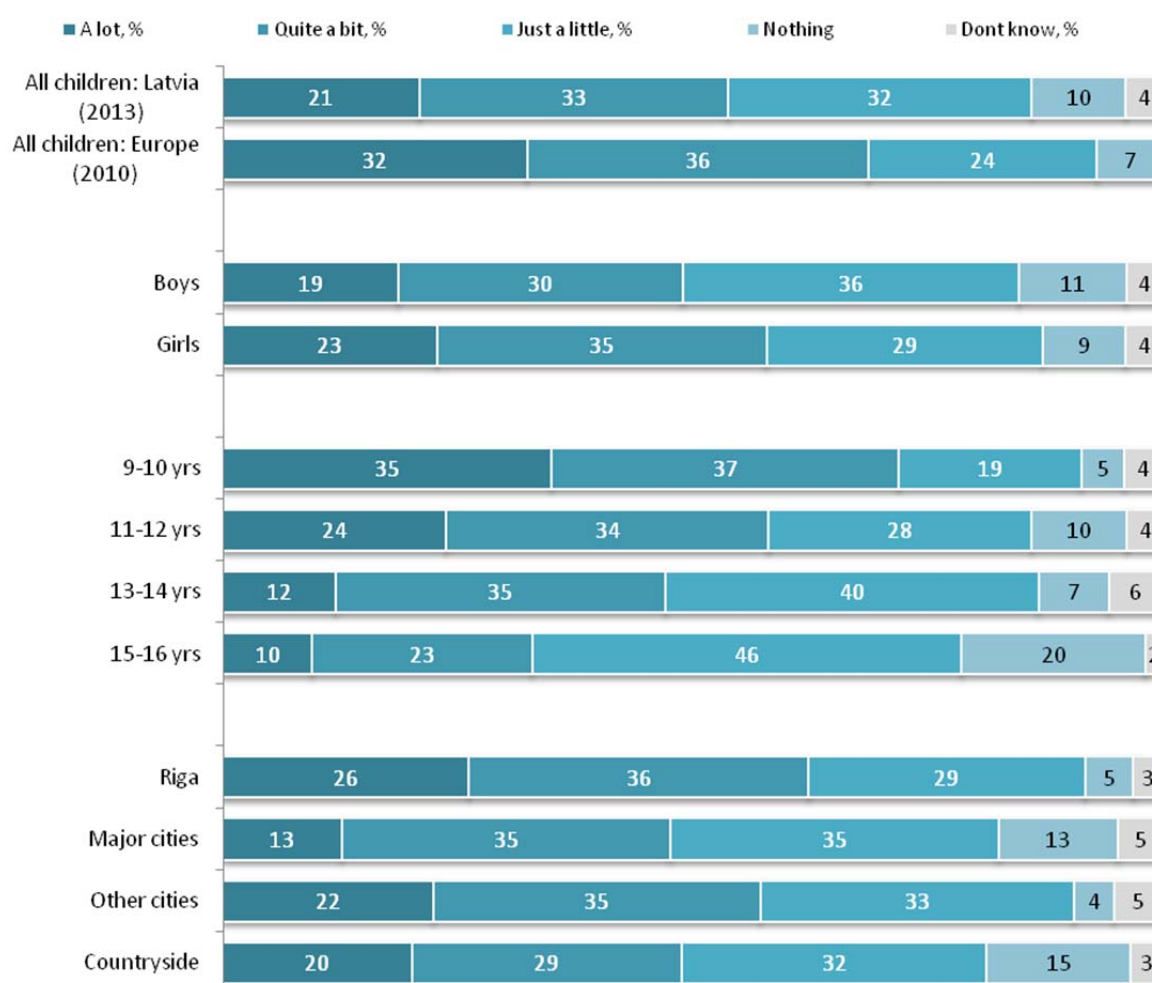


Q: Do the things that your parent does/parents do relating to how you use the internet help to make your internet experience better, or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet.

These assessments can be viewed and interpreted in the context of some further assessments provided by the children. First is the children's assessment about how much their parents know in general about their internet use. One in five children think that their parents know a lot about what they do on the internet. One in three are convinced that their parents know quite a lot. But another one in three, that parents know little. One in ten believe that their parents know nothing at all. Girls and younger children more frequently provided positive assessments of the degree of their parents' awareness.

**Figure 45: How much parents know about their child's internet use**

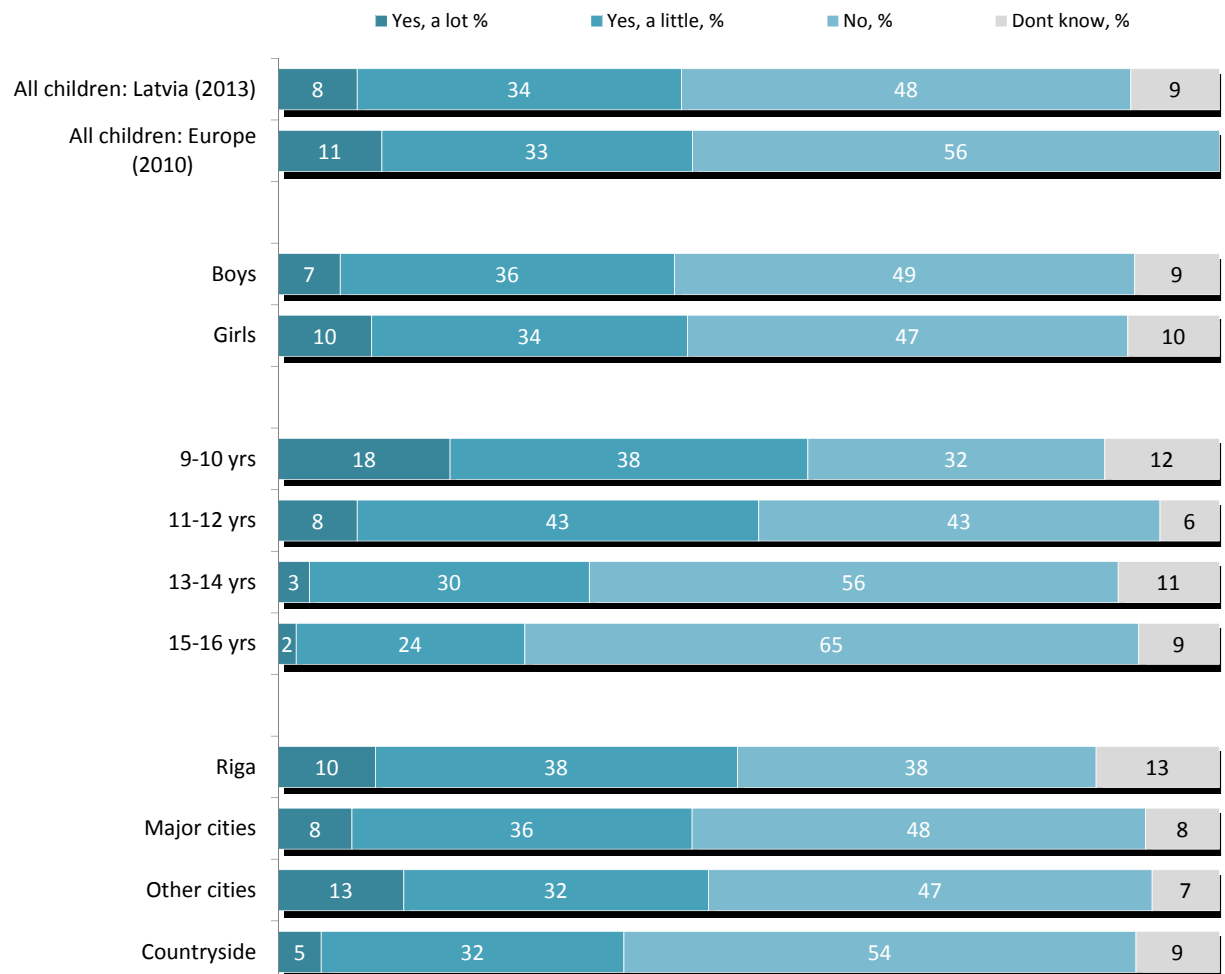


Q: How much do you think your parent(s) knows about what you do on the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Second is whether children consider if the activities performed by their parents restrict their internet use. About one in ten children assess that the activities performed by their parents concerning what they do about their use of the internet restrict what they can do, and 34% consider that they restrict them only slightly. At the same time, about half consider that parents' control does not in any way restrict their internet use. Consequently, although children believe that their parents know a lot about how children use the internet, only a small segment consider that their parents' control is experienced as restrictive. Younger children more often assessed that control by parents restricts their internet use – this must be linked with the fact that at this age, parents' control in these age groups is more noticeable in general; consequently these assessments are also higher. Likewise it can be seen that children living in rural areas more rarely assess that their parents' control is restrictive in regard to their internet use.

**Figure 46: Whether parental mediation limits the child's activities on the internet**

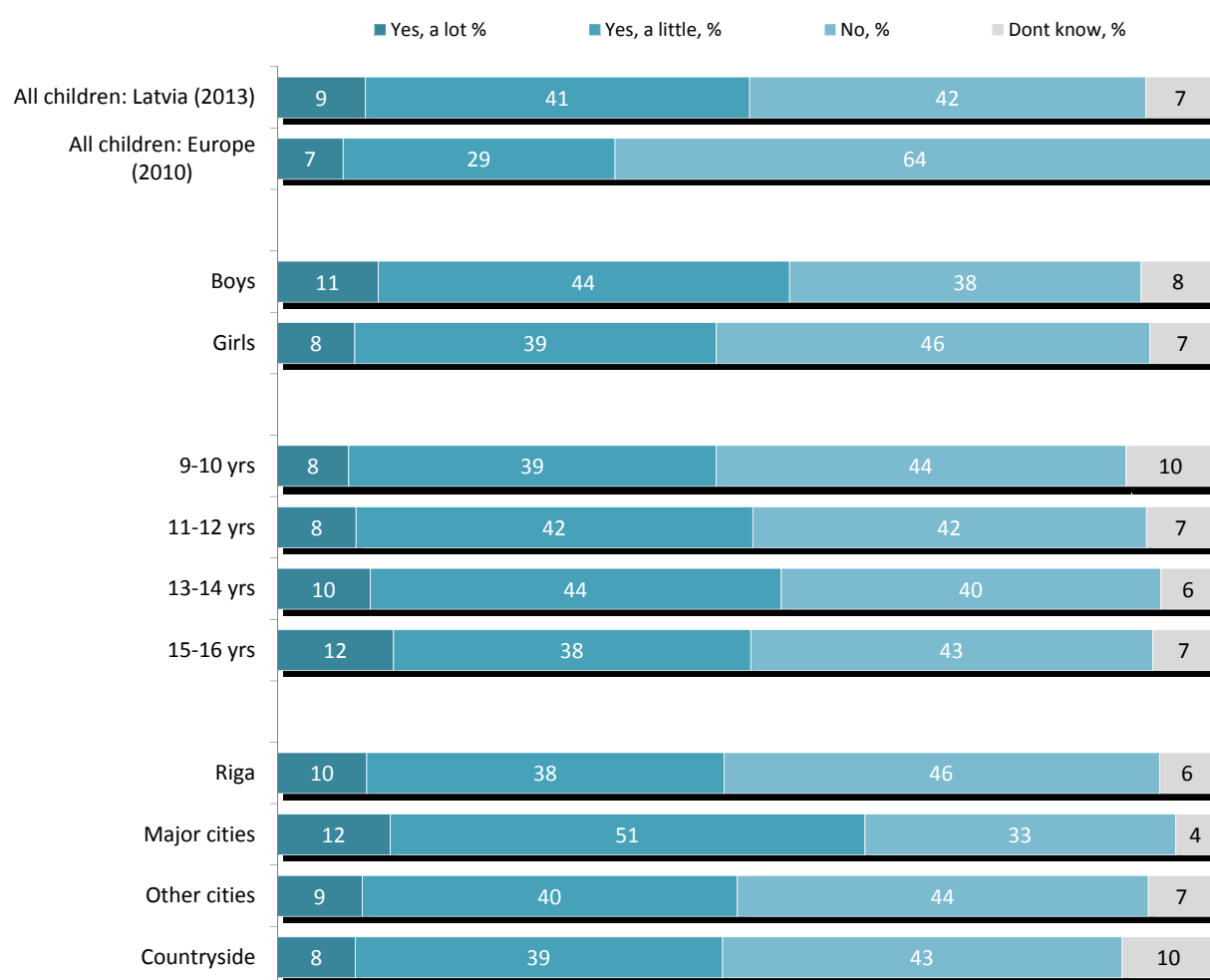


Q: Do the things that your parent does/parents do relating to how you use the internet limit what you can do on the internet or not really?

*Base:* All children who use the internet

Third is whether children obey supervision over internet use by their parents. One in ten children in the survey admit that they do not always obey their parents' advice and ignore their control. Another 41% claim that they do it occasionally, but 42% consider that they always obey their parents in regard to internet use restrictions and advice.

**Figure 47: Whether child ignores what parents say when they use the internet**

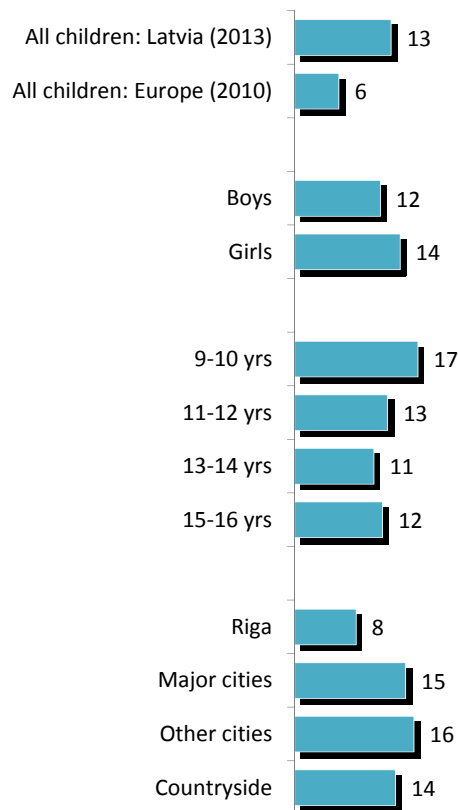


Q: And do you ever ignore what your parent(s) tell you when use the internet, or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Fourth is how children assess the reaction of their parents after they had a negative experience on the internet. Only 13% of the children claim that their parents do something new or differently because they have had a negative experience using the internet. Slightly more frequently, such an assessment was given by 9- to 10-year-olds.

**Figure 48: Whether parents do anything differently because the child has been bothered by something on the internet**

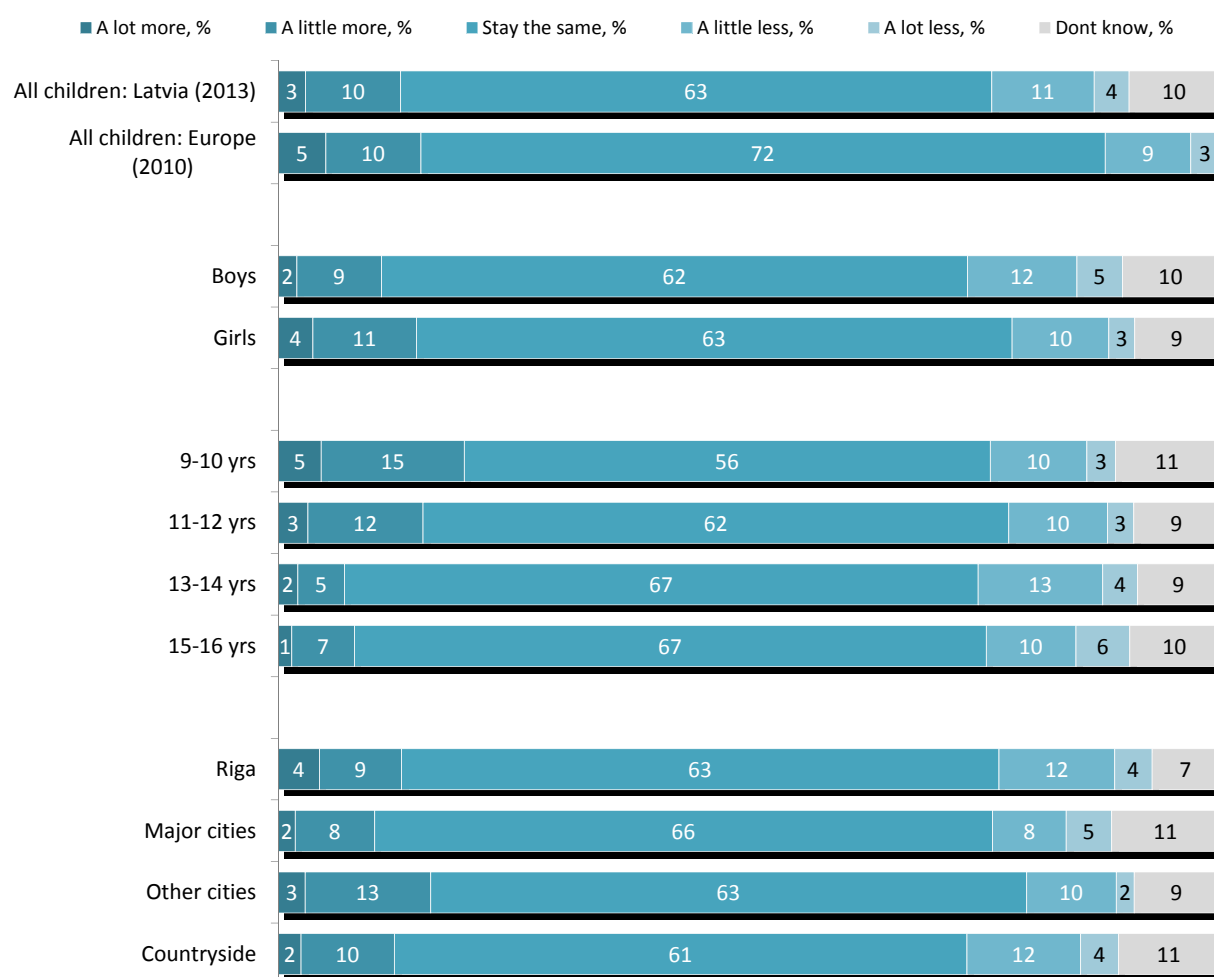


Q: Does your parent/do your parents do anything new or different these days because you have been bothered by something on the internet in the past, or not really?

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

Fifth is whether children consider supervision measures by their parents as sufficient or insufficient. Fifteen per cent of the children want their parents' monitoring over their internet use to be less, 13% to have it more stringent, but 63% to be as it is now. Boys have slightly more often expressed a wish to have less supervision by parents, while there are no marked differences among other social demographic groups.

**Figure 49: Whether the child would like their parent(s) to take more or less interest in what they do online**



Q: Overall, would you like your parent(s) to take more or less interest in what you do on the internet, or stay the same?

Base: All children who use the internet.

### 11.3. Teachers

Eighty-four per cent of the children consider that their teachers perform at least one of the eight internet monitoring activities listed in the questionnaire. Most often – in 64% of cases – that was advice on how to use the internet safely. Sixty-two per cent of teachers introduced rules about what a child is allowed to do when using the internet at school, but 61% explained why some internet sites were good or bad. The fact that teachers have performed some supervision and monitoring activities was

comparatively more often admitted by 11- to 14-year-olds, as well as by children living in small towns and rural areas.

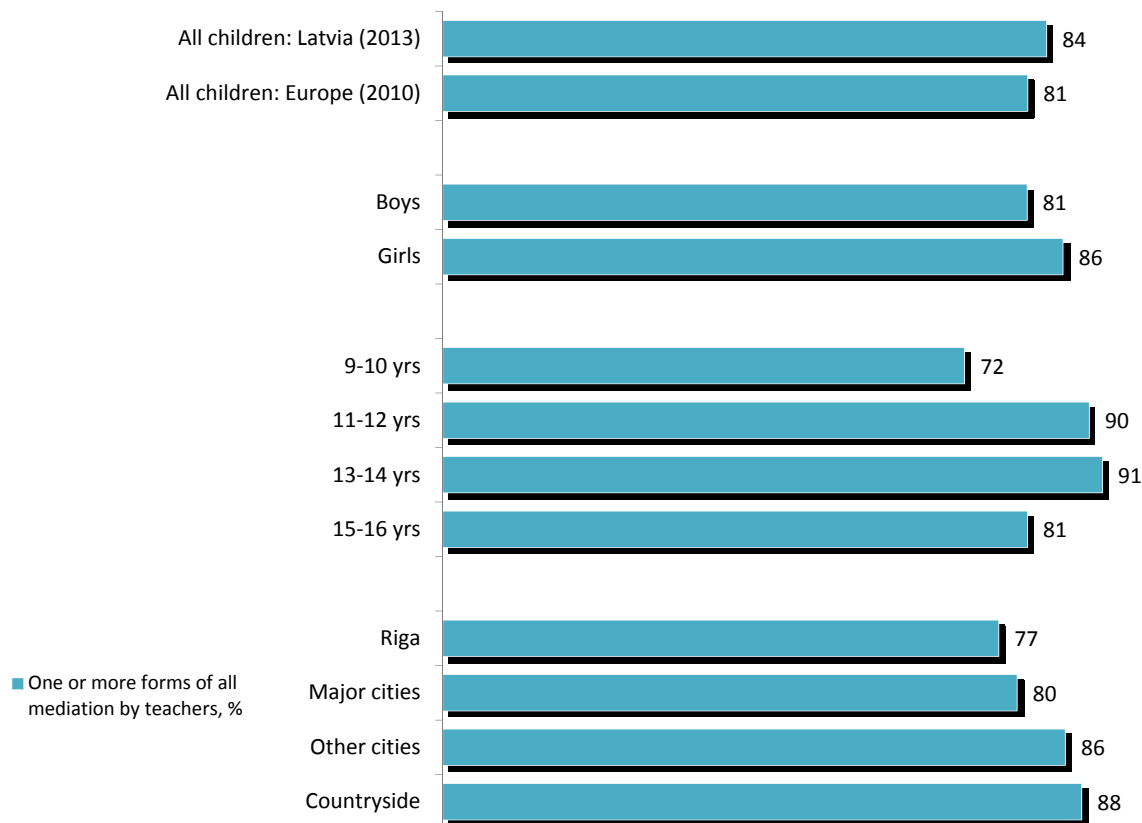
**Table 20: Teachers' mediation of the child's internet use, by age and gender**

%	Latvia All: (2013)	Europe All: (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	64	58	42	55	66	72	70	73	63	68
Made rules about what you can do on the internet at school	62	62	36	53	67	69	71	72	62	61
Explained why some websites are good or bad	61	58	43	58	66	69	61	69	59	63
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	57	48	40	51	61	63	60	68	52	61
Helped you when something was difficult to do or find on the internet	56	58	35	47	57	68	57	63	54	60
Talked to you about what you do on the internet	47	53	45	41	43	52	52	50	51	44
Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you	34	40	20	33	34	47	29	41	21	37
Helped you in the past when something bothered you on the internet	33	24	22	33	37	47	28	35	23	33
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>84</b>

Q: Have any teachers at your school ever done any of these things?

Base: All children who use the internet.

**Figure 50: Teachers' mediation of child's internet use**



Q: Have any teachers at your school ever done any of these things?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Comparing the evaluations provided by children about supervision carried out by parents and teachers, teachers more often than parents explained why some internet sites were good or bad (61% and 58% respectively), and gave advice about safe internet use (64% and 50%). Parents more often than teachers have helped their children when they have had difficulties doing something or finding something on the internet (64% and 56% respectively), have helped when the child had been upset about something on the internet (46% and 33%), and talked it over with the child about what should be done if they have been upset by something on the internet (46% and 34%).

This allows us to conclude that teachers have more often been informers, while parents have been personal assistance providers in the case of problems.



## 11.4. Peers

It is obvious from previous chapters that in complicated cases children often turn to their friends and acquaintances, but not to parents or teachers; consequently, peers must be considered as an essential social group that can have a marked influence on children's internet use. Eighty-one per cent of the surveyed children claim that their peers have helped them in safe internet use. Most frequently, in 74% of cases, their friends have helped when they have had difficulty in doing or finding something on the internet; 44% of the children's friends explained why some internet sites were good or bad, and 42% advised on how to use internet safely. More frequently friends rendered assistance to girls, but the differences are not explicitly big.

If one compares the evaluations by children about the assistance for internet use by parents, teachers and peers, the role of peers is explicitly more essential in only one of the assessed aspects – namely, friends have considerably more often than parents or teachers helped when they have had some problems doing or finding something on the internet (74%, 64% and 56% respectively). In all the other aspects included in the survey, the role of parents or teachers is more significant.

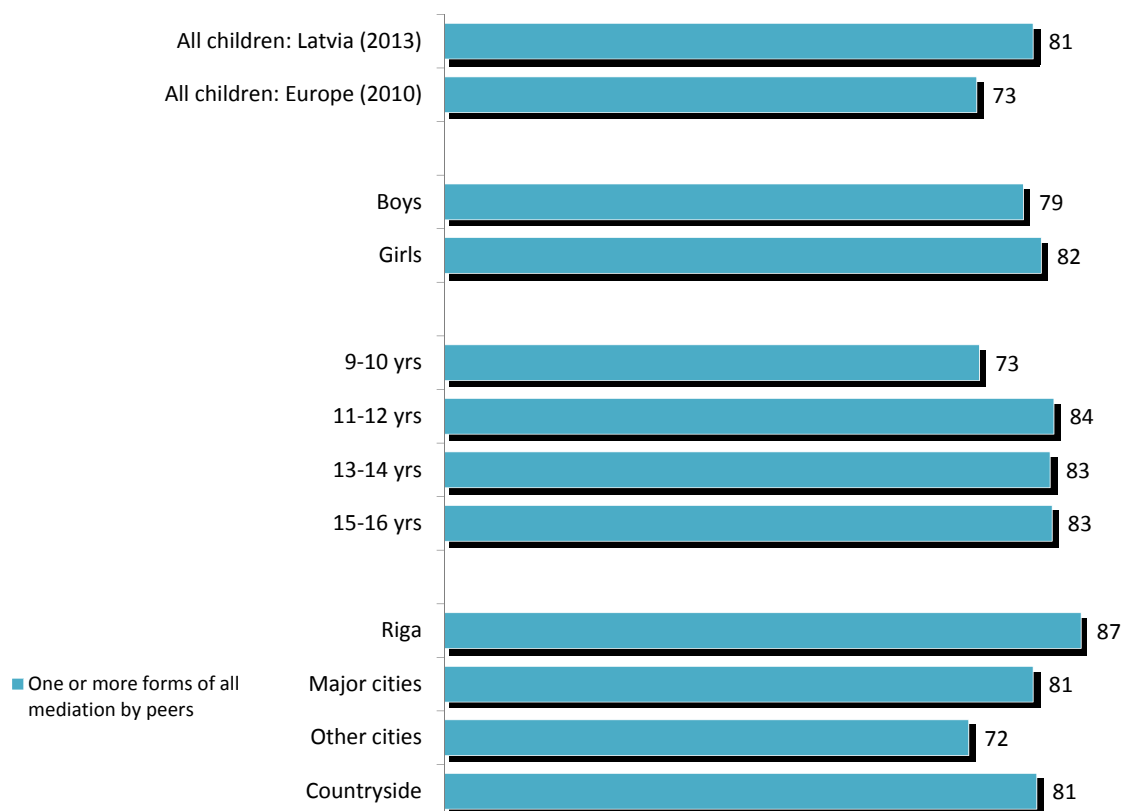
**Table 21: Peers' active mediation of the child's internet safety, by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All: Europe (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Helped you when something was difficult to do or find on the internet	74	64	65	67	80	76	75	76	71	80
Explained why some websites are good or bad	44	41	35	41	48	53	45	42	44	44
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	42	44	27	35	50	45	44	42	44	47
Helped you in the past when something bothered you on the internet	40	28	21	33	38	47	37	46	40	56
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	40	37	28	36	45	41	37	41	40	49
<b>One or more of these</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>86</b>

Q: Have your friends ever done any of these things?

Base: All children who use the internet.

**Figure 51: Peer mediation of child's internet safety**

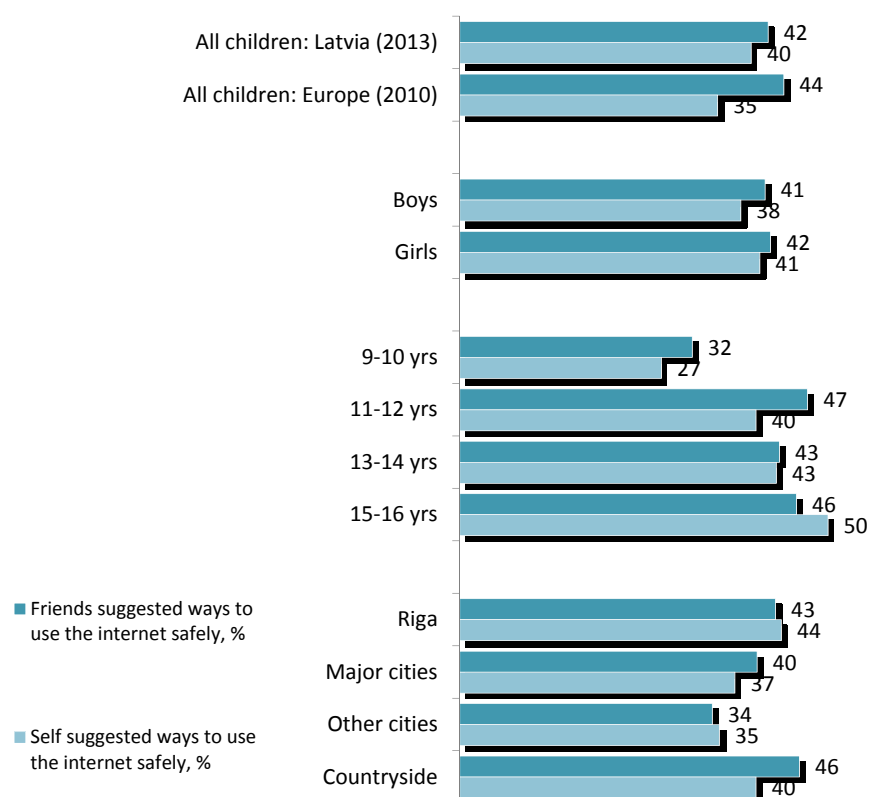


Q: Have your friends ever done any of these things?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Children were also asked to assess if they had ever helped someone else to use the internet safely. The study data show that proportions are approximately equal between those children who have received such assistance and those who have provided it to others (42% and 40% respectively). Comparing social demographic groups, it can be observed that children from the 9–10 age group have done it more rarely.

**Figure 52: Peer mediation of child's safe internet use**



Q: Have you ever suggested ways to use the internet safely to your friends?

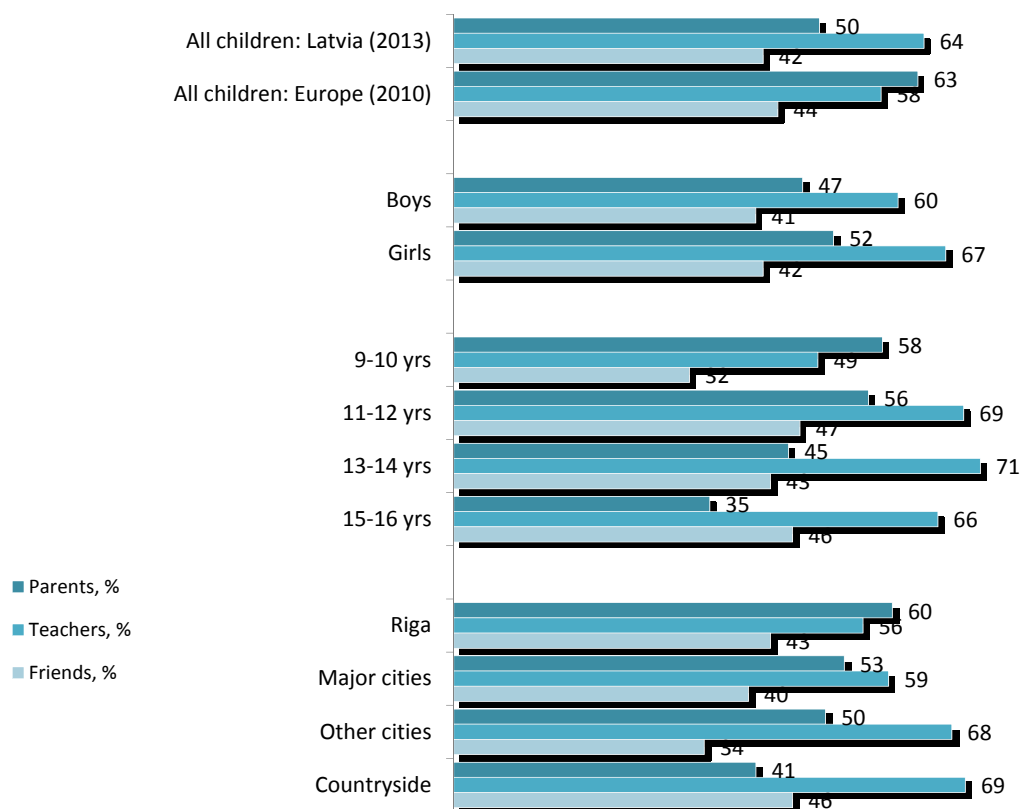
Q: Have your friends ever suggested ways to use the internet safely?

Base: All children who use the internet.

### 11.5. Parent, teacher and peer mediation compared

Parents' role as the most significant one is observed among 9- to 10-year-olds, but in the group of 11- to 16-year-olds, teachers' role is prevalent. Parents' role is particularly low in the 15- to 16-year-old age group.

**Figure 53: Whether parents, peers or teachers have ever suggested ways to use the internet safely**



Q: Have your parents ever suggested ways to use the internet safely?

Q: Have your teachers ever suggested ways to use the internet safely?

Q: Have your friends ever suggested ways to use the internet safely?

*Base:* All children who use the internet.

## 11.6. Sources of safety awareness

Parents, teachers and friends are certainly the most essential social demographic groups for children, but regarding safe use of the internet, there are some other possible sources of information. Therefore children were asked during the survey to indicate if they have ever also received advice about how to use internet safely from other individuals and/or places. As the obtained data show, about one-half of children have also received such assistance from relatives, one-fifth from a librarian, internet sites, from someone whose job includes provision of advice about internet use, as well as from an ISP. Only 23% of the children had not received assistance from any of the additional sources included in the questionnaire.

**Table 22: Children's sources of advice on internet safety (other than parents, teachers or friends), by age and gender**

%	All: Latvia (2013)	All Europa (2010)	9–10		11–12		13–14		15–16	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Other relative	49	47	49	48	57	50	48	50	37	52
Librarian	21	6	19	15	29	20	19	23	20	22
On internet	17	12	5	5	15	16	17	28	29	31
From someone whose duties include provision of advice about internet use	17	9	6	6	19	18	17	26	20	28
Television, radio, newspapers, magazines	17	20	10	10	14	20	17	25	17	26
Internet service provider	7	6	1	3	3	6	11	12	5	14
Someone whose job is to give advice over the internet	3	6	2	1	2	2	4	3	6	8
I haven't received advice from any of these	23	34	30	26	20	25	21	17	24	16

Q: Have you EVER received advice about how to use the internet safely from any of these people or places?

Base: All children who use the internet.

## **12. Annex 1: Technical information**

<b>Population survey</b>	Children aged 9–16 who use the internet
<b>Planned sample size</b>	1,000 respondents
<b>Actual sample size</b>	1,001 respondents
<b>Selection method</b>	Stratified random sampling, random walk
<b>Method of stratification</b>	Administrative territorial
<b>Survey method</b>	Face-to-face interviews and self-completion mode at the place of residence of respondents
<b>Survey mode</b>	PAI
<b>Geographic coverage</b>	All regions of Latvia (133 sampled locations)
<b>Time</b>	4 October 2013 to 10 November 2013
<b>Number of interviewers</b>	91
<b>Total number of attempted contacts</b>	2,871
<b>Number of interviews done</b>	1,010
<b>Total number of failed contacts</b>	1,261
<b>Total number of non-responses</b>	600
<b>Minimum length of interview</b>	25 minutes
<b>Maximum length of interview</b>	210 minutes
<b>Average length of interview</b>	55 minutes

**Characteristics of achieved sample in the 9–10 age group (use internet)**

	Number of respondents	Number or respondent in sample (%)	Inhabitants' registry data as of 21/01/13
<b>Total</b>	263	100.0	100.0
<b>Age (years)</b>			
9	136	51.7	51.4
10	127	48.3	48.6

**Region**

Riga (capital)	71	27.0	29.2
Pierīga (Riga vicinity)	54	20.5	19.5
Vidzeme	26	9.9	10.0
Kurzeme	35	13.3	14.3
Zemgale	37	14.1	13.0
Latgale	40	15.2	13.9

**Sex**

Boys	113	43.0	51.4
Girls	150	57.0	48.6

**Place of residence**

Riga (capital)	71	27.0	29.2
Other town	95	36.1	36.9
Countryside	97	36.9	33.9

**Characteristics of achieved sample in the 11–16 age group (use internet)**

	Number of respondents	Number or respondent in sample (%)	Inhabitants' registry data as of 21/01/13
<b>Total</b>	738	100.0	100.0
<b>Age (years)</b>			
11	154	20.9	17.0
12	132	17.9	17.5
13	128	17.3	16.8
14	114	15.4	15.9
15	102	13.8	16.0
16	108	14.6	16.9

**Location**

Riga (capital)	181	24.5	26.3
Pierīga (Riga vicinity)	142	19.2	19.0
Vidzeme	77	10.4	11.2
Kurzeme	111	15.0	14.9
Zemgale	111	15.0	13.4
Latgale	116	15.7	15.3

**Sex**

Boys	343	46.5	51.2
Girls	395	53.5	48.8

**Place of residence**

Riga (capital)	181	24.5	26.3
Other town	281	38.1	36.7
Countryside	276	37.4	37.1

## Non-response

<b>1. Respondent who complies to sampling criteria but has not been interviewed</b>	
1.1. Doesn't wish to respond	455
1.2. Can't talk/busy	34
1.3. Sick/tired	19
1.4. Terminated interview	4
1.5. The respective respondent is not in*	80
1.6. Under influence of alcohol/drugs	2
1.7. Language barrier	1
1.8. Other	5

<b>2. Respondent whose compliance to sampling criteria is unknown/has not been interviewed</b>	
2.1. It cannot be identified if the respondent is in/at home*	237
2.2. The specific/given address cannot be reached/it is impossible to get into the building	3

Note: \* After three visits to the specific address.

<b>3. Respondent cannot be reached</b>	
3.1. The selected building is not inhabited/empty	6
3.2. Office premises	17
3.3. Municipality premises	1
3.4. Seasonal/holiday places of residence	9
3.5. The child does not use the internet	63
3.6. No respondent compliant to the target group in the household	925

<b>Quality control</b>		
Repeated calling of respondents	Respondent number	Respondent number (% from sample)
Total number of attempted contacts	336	33.5
Quality back-check interviews	295	29.4
<b>Visual examination of questionnaire</b>	1,010	100.0
Questionnaires compliant to quality requirements	1,001	99.1
Questionnaires non-compliant to quality requirements	9	0.9